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RAPIN E. SMITH.

No.

(KNOWLEDGE IS POWER.)

THE

WORKS

Of the LEARNED

BENJAMIN WHICHCOTE, D. D.

Rector of St. LAWRENCE JEWRY,

LONDON.

VOLUME I.

ABERDEEN:

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Some Account of the

LIFE

OF

Dr. BENJAMIN WHICHCOTE.

DR. *BENJAMIN WHICHCOTE* was deſcended of an antient and good family, and was the ſixth ſon of his father, being born in *Shropſhire*, *March* the 11th 1609. He was educated at *Emanuel College*, in the univerſity, where he was choſen fellow, and was an excellent tutor and inſtructor of youth, and bred up many perſons of quality, and others who afterwards proved uſeful and eminent; as many perhaps as any tutor of his time. About the age of four or five and thirty, he was made provoſt of *King*'s *College*, where he was a moſt vigilant and prudent governor, a great encourager of learning and good order; and by his careful and wiſe management of the eſtate of the college, brought it in to a very flouriſhing condition, and left it ſo. "It cannot, ſays Dr. *Tillotſon*, be denied (nor "am I much concerned to diſſemble it) that here "he poſſeſſed another man's place, who by the i-"niquity of the times was wrongfully ejected; I "mean Dr. *Collins*, the famous and learned divini-"ty-profeſſor of that univerſity; during whoſe life "(and he lived many years after) by the free con-"ſent of the college there were two ſhares out of "the common dividend allotted to the provoſt, one "whereof was conſtantly paid to Dr. *Collins*, as if "he had been ſtill provoſt. To this Dr. *Whichcote* "did

rchbiſhop Tillotſon's Funeral ſermon of Dr. W. in Tillotſon's Works Vol. 1. f. 9

" did not only give his conſent (without which the
" thing could not have been done) but was very for-
" ward for the doing of it, though hereby he did
" not only conſiderably leſſen his own profit, but
" likewiſe incur no ſmall cenſure and hazard as the
" times then were. And leſt this had not been kind-
" neſs enough to that worthy perſon, whoſe place
" he poſſeſſed, in his laſt will, he left his ſon, Sir
" *John Collins*, a legacy of one hundred pounds.
" And as he was not wanting either in reſpect or
" real kindneſs to the rightful owner; ſo neither
" did he ſtoop to do any thing unworthy, to obtain
" that place, for he never took the covenant. And
" not only ſo, but, by the particular friendſhip and
" intereſt which he had in ſome of the chief viſi-
" tors, he prevailed to have the greateſt part of the
" fellows of that college exempted from that im-
" poſition, and preſerved them in their places by
" that means. And to the fellows that were ejec-
" ted by the viſitors, he likewiſe freely conſented,
" that their full dividend for that year ſhould be
" paid them; even after they were ejected. Among
" theſe was the reverend and ingenious Dr. *Charles*
" *Maſon*, upon whom, after he was ejected, the col-
" lege did confer a good living which then fell in
" their gift, with the conſent of the provoſt, who
" knowing him to be a worthy man, was contented
" to run the hazard of the diſpleaſure of thoſe times.
" So that I hope none will be hard upon him, that
" he was contented upon ſuch terms to be in a ca-
" pacity to do good in bad times." Beſides his care of the college, he had a very great and good influence upon the univerſity in general. Every Sunday in the afternoon, for almoſt twenty years together, he preached in *Trinity Church*, where he had a great number, not only of the young ſcholars, but of thoſe of greater ſtanding and beſt repute for learning in

the

the univerſity, his conſtant and attentive auditors; and in thoſe wild and unſettled times contributed more to the forming of the ſtudents of that univerſity to a ſober ſenſe of religion, than any man in that age. In 1658 he wrote a copy of Latin verſes upon the death of *Oliver Cromwell*. It is printed in *muſarum Cantabrigienſium luctus & gratulatio: ille in funere Oliveri Angliæ Scotiæ & Hiberniæ protectoris; hæc de Richardi ſucceſſione feliciſſimâ ad eundem. Cambridge*, 1658, in 4to. Dr. *Whichcote's* verſes are as follow.

Non male mutati mores & lenior ætas;
Olim vexârunt animas formidine pœnæ
Mentes torſerunt caupones relligionis,
Quos Chriſtus ducit, Romanus apoſtata cogit:
Flectit amore Deus, ſed papa timore coercet:
Inſtruit ille animum, & placido lenimine mentem
Suaviter emollit, meroque favore relaxat;
Deſtruit hic corpus miſerum, carnemque flagellis
Affligit, propriis quo poſſit ſubdere votis.
Quæ prohibent removet, raptuſque furore gehennæ
Allegans cœlos, ad Tartara dira remittit.
Vis, dolus & fraudes ſunt inſtrumenta maligni
Paſtoris, ſatanæque artes, quas pura repellit
Relligio, nec cœleſtes ſinit eſſe ſcœleſtos.
Magna fides penetrat cor, ſpiritualibus armis
Aggreditur victrix, totum peragratque per orbem,
Plena ſui ſubnixa Deo, carnalia ſpernens,
Sobrius auſculta veterum quid pagina narrat:
Fata trahunt homines cruciatibus ingenioſos,
Decumbunt tremuli non ſiccâ morte tyranni,
Arte ſua pereant ſemper (juſtiſſima lex eſt)
Artifices nequam, quos inclementia pulſat.
At pater hic patriæ, non eſt tormenta minatus,
Annos uſque expirat, et alta in pace quieſcit.
Filius aſcendit ſimilis gratuſque Britannis,

Quæ-

Quæque Deum ſapiunt ſcit pectora flectere lente.
Nam ratione animum generoſum ducere ſuave eſt;
At mentem ingenuam trahere ingratum atque moleſtum.

After he left *Cambridge*, he came to *London*, and was choſen miniſter of *Black Friars*, where he continued till the fire of *London* in 1665, and then retired to a donative which he had at *Milton* near *Cambridge*, where he preached conſtantly, and relieved the poor, and had their children taught to read at his own charge, and made up differences among the neighbours. Here he ſtaid till the promotion of Dr. *John Wilkins* to the biſhoprick of *Cheſter* in 1668, when he was by his intereſt and recommendation, preſented to the rectory of St. *Laurence Jewry*. But during the building of that church, upon invitation of the court of Aldermen, in the mayorality of Sir *William Turner*, he preached before that honourable auditory at *Guild-hall Chapel* every Sunday in the afternoon with great acceptance and approbation, for about the ſpace of ſeven years. When his church was built, he beſtowed his pains there twice a week, where he had the general love and reſpect of his pariſh, and a very conſiderable and judicious auditory, though not very numerous, by reaſon of the weakneſs of his voice in his declining age. A little before Eaſter in the year 1683, he went down to *Cambridge*, whereupon taking a great cold, he fell into a diſtemper, which in a few days put a period to his life. He died with uncommon ſentiments of piety and devotion. He expreſſed great diſlike of the principles of ſeparation, and ſaid, that he was the more deſirous to receive the ſacrament, that he might declare his full communion with the church of Chriſt all the world over. He diſclaimed popery, and as things of near affinity with it, or rather parts of it, all ſuperſtition and uſur-

uſurpation upon the conſciences of men. He died in the houſe of his ancient and learned friend Dr. *Cudworth*, maſter of *Chriſt's College*, in *May* 1683, and was interred in the church of St. *Laurence Jewry*, his funeral ſermon being preached by Dr. *John Tillotſon*, in which his character is drawn with great juſtice. "I ſhall not, ſays he, inſiſt upon his exemplary piety and devotion towards God, of which his whole life was one continued teſtimony. Nor will I praiſe his profound learning, for which he was juſtly had in ſo great reputation. The moral improvements of his mind, a godlike temper and diſpoſition, (as he was wont to call it) he chiefly valued and aſpired after; that univerſal charity and goodneſs, which he did continually preach and practiſe. His converſation was exceeding kind and affable, grave and winning, prudent and profitable. He was ſlow to declare his judgment and modeſt in delivering it. Never paſſionate, never peremptory: ſo far from impoſing upon others that he was rather apt to yield. And though he had a moſt profound and well poiſed judgment, yet he was of all men I ever knew, the moſt patient to hear others differ from him, and the moſt eaſy to be convinced when good reaſon was offered; and which is ſeldom ſeen, more apt to be favourable to another man's reaſon than his own. Studious and inquiſitive men commonly at ſuch an age (at forty or fifty at the utmoſt) have fixed and ſettled their judgments in moſt points, and as it were, made their laſt underſtanding; ſuppoſing that they have thought, or read, or heard, what can be ſaid on all ſides of things, and after that they grow poſitive, and impatient of contradiction, thinking it a diſparagement to them to alter their judgment. But our deceaſed friend was ſo wiſe, as to be willing to learn to the laſt, knowing that

"no

" no man can grow wiſer without ſome change of
" his mind, without gaining ſome knowledge which
" he had not, or correcting ſome error, which he
" had before. He had attained ſo perfect a maſte-
" ry of his paſſions, that for the latter and greateſt
" part of his life he was hardly ever ſeen to be
" tranſported with anger, and as he was extremely
" careful not to provoke any man, ſo not to be pro-
" voked by any; uſing to ſay, if I provoke a man,
" he is the worſe for my company; and if I ſuffer
" myſelf to be provoked by him I ſhall be the worſe
" for his. He very ſeldom reproved any perſon in
" company otherwiſe than by ſilence or ſome ſign
" of uneaſineſs, or ſome very ſoft and gentle word;
" which yet from the reſpect men generally bore
" to him, did often prove effectual. For he under-
" ſtood human nature very well, and how to apply
" himſelf to it in the moſt eaſy and effectual ways.
" He was a great encourager and kind director of
" young divines, and one of the moſt candid hear-
" ers of ſermons, I think, that ever was; ſo that
" though all men did mightily reverence his judg-
" ment, yet no man had reaſon to fear his cenſure.
" He never ſpake well of himſelf, nor ill of others,
" making good that ſaying of *Panſa* in *Tully*, *Ne-*
" *minem alterius, qui ſuæ confideret virtuti, invidere*;
" that no man is apt to envy the worth and vir-
" tues of another, that hath any of his own to truſt
" to. In a word, he had all thoſe virtues, and in a
" high degree, which an excellent temper, great
" condeſcenſion, long care and watchfulneſs over
" himſelf, together with the aſſiſtance of God's
" grace (which he continually implored and migh-
" tily relied upon) are apt to produce. Particular-
" ly he excelled in the virtues of converſation, hu-
" manity and gentleneſs, and humility, a prudent
" and peaceable, and reconciling temper. As he
" had

" had a plentiful eſtate, ſo he was of a very chari-
" table diſpoſition: which yet was not ſo well
" known to many, becauſe in the diſpoſal of his
" charity, he very much affected ſecrecy. He fre-
" quently beſtowed his alms on poor houſekeepers,
" diſabled by age or ſickneſs to ſupport themſelves,
" thinking thoſe to be the moſt proper objects of it.
" He was rather frugal in expence upon himſelf,
" that ſo he might have wherewithal to relieve the
" neceſſities of others. And not only charitable in
" his life, but in a very beautiful manner at his
" death, bequeathing in pious and charitable lega-
" cies to the value of a thouſand pounds: to the
" library of the univerſity of *Cambridge* fifty pounds,
" and of *King*'s college, one hundred pounds, and of
" *Emanuel College*, twenty pounds, to which college
" he had been a conſiderable benefactor before, hav-
" ing founded three ſeveral ſcholarſhips there to the
" value of a thouſand pounds, out of a charity with
" the diſpoſal whereof he was entruſted, and which
" not without great difficulty and pains he at laſt
" received. To the poor of the ſeveral places where
" his eſtate lay, and where he had been miniſter,
" he gave above one hundred pounds. Among thoſe
" who had been his ſervants, or who were ſo at his
" death, he diſpoſed in annuities and legacies in mo-
" ney, to the value of above three hundred pounds.
" To other charitable uſes, and among his poor
" relations, above three hundred pounds. To eve-
" ry one of his tennants, he left a legacy according
" to the proportion of the eſtate they held, by way
" of remembrance of him; and to one of them,
" who was gone much behind, he remitted in his
" will ſeventy pounds. And as became his great
" goodneſs he was ever a remarkably kind landlord,
" forgiving his tennants, and always making abate-
" ments to them for hard years, or any other acci-

" dental

" dental loſſes that happened to them. He made " likewiſe a wiſe proviſion in his will to prevent law- " ſuits among legatees, by appointing two or three " perſons of the greateſt prudence and authority a- " mong his relations, final arbitrators of all diffe- " rences that ſhould ariſe."

His ſelect ſermons were printed at *London*, 1698, in 8vo, with a preface by the late *Earl* of *Shaftsbury*, author of the CHARACTERISTICKS, which collection was ſince republiſhed at *Edinburgh*, in the year 1742 in 12mo, with an excellent recommendatory epiſtle, by the revd. and learned Dr. *William Wiſhart* principal of the college of *Edinburgh*. Four other volumes of his diſcourſes were publiſhed by Dr. *John Jeffery*, Archdeacon of *Norwich*, at *London*, 1702, in 8vo.

We ſhall conclude this ſhort account of our author with the character which biſhop *Burnet*, that excellent prelate, gives of him. Speaking of thoſe divines who were generally called *Latitudinarians*, he ſays, " Dr. *Whichcote* was a man of a rare tem- " per, very mild and obliging. He had great credit " with ſome that had been eminent in the late times " but made all the uſe he could of it, to protect " good men of all perſuaſions. He was much for " liberty of conſcience. And being diſguſted with " the dry ſyſtematical way of thoſe times, he ſtudied " to raiſe thoſe who converſed with him, to a noble " ſet of thoughts, and to conſider religion as a ſeed " of a DEIFORM nature: (to uſe one of his own " phraſes) in order to this, he ſet young ſtudents, " much on reading the ancient philoſophers, chiefly " *Plato*, *Tully* and *Plotin*; and on conſidering the " chriſtian religion, as a doctrine ſent from God, " both to elevate and ſweeten human nature, in " which he was a great example, as well as a wiſe " and kind inſtructor."

CON-

CONTENTS

VOL. I.

DISCOURSE I.

The Shortneſs of Human Charity.— Jonah iv. 1, 2. *But it diſpleaſed Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry. And he prayed unto the Lord, and ſaid, I pray thee, O Lord, was not this my ſaying, when I was yet in my country? therefore I fled before unto Tarſhiſh; for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, ſlow to anger, and of great kindneſs, and repenteſt thee of the evil.* page. 1

DISCOURSE II.

The Perfection of the Mercy of God.—— Joel ii. 13. *For he is gracious and merciful, ſlow to anger, and of great kindneſs, and repenteth him of the evil.* p. 20

DISCOURSE III.

The Difference of Times with reſpect to religion.— Pſalm. xcv. 7. *To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.* p. 35

DISCOURSE IV.

The Joy which the righteous have in God. — Pſalm xxxiii. 1. *Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous, for praiſe is comely for the upright.* p. 56

DISCOURSE V. VI. VII.

The ſecret Blaſting of Men —Pſalm xxxix. 11. *When thou with rebukes doſt correct man for iniquity, thou makeſt his beauty to conſume away like a moth: ſurely every man is vanity. Selah.* p. 74. 86. 101.

DISCOURSE VIII.

Preached before the Hon. the Houſe of Commons, *February* 4, 1673 Jer vi. 8. *Be thou inſtructed O Jeruſalem, leſt my ſoul depart from thee; leſt I make thee deſolate, a land not inhabited.* p. 119

DISCOURSE IX.

The danger of Unfaithfulneſs to God. —— Heb. iii. 12. *Take heed brethren, leſt there be in any of you, an evil*

evil heart of unbelief, and departing from the living God. p. 136

DISCOURSE X.

The Malignity of Popery. —— Jam. iii. 18. *The fruit of righteouſneſs is ſown in peace of them that make peace.* p. 160

DISCOURSE XI.

The Deceitfulneſs of ſin. —— Heb. iii. 13. *Take heed, leſt any of you be hardned through the deceitfulneſs of ſin.* p. 182

DISCOURSE XII. XIII. XIV. XV. XVI.

The Converſion of a Sinner. —— Ezek. xviii. 27. *When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedneſs that he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right, he ſhall ſave his ſoul alive.* p. 198. 210. 226. 241. 257.

DISCOURSE XVII. XVIII. XIX. XX.

The true Valuation of Man.—— Luke xvi. 25. *But Abraham ſaid, ſon, remember that thou in thy lifetime receiveſt thy good things, and likewiſe Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.* p. 268. 285. 303. 320.

DISCOURSE XXI.

The Neceſſary Repentance of a Sinner. —— Iſaiah i. 16. *Waſh ye, make ye clean, put away the evil of your doings.* &c. p. 332

DISCOURSE XXII. XXIII.

The Exerciſe and Progreſs of a Chriſtian. —— Phil. iii. 12. *Not as though I had already attained or were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which I alſo am apprehended of Chriſt Jeſus.* p. 347 359

DISCOURSE XXIV.

The Practice of thoſe who are improved —— Phil. iii. 14. *Let as many of us therefore as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwiſe minded, God ſhall reveal even this unto you.* p. 373

DIS-

DISCOURSE I.

The SHORTNESS of HUMAN CHARITY.

JONAH iv. 1, 2.

But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry. And he prayed unto the Lord, and said, I pray thee, O Lord, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? therefore, I fled before unto Tarshish; for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil.

BUT *it displeased* Jonah *exceedingly, and he was very angry.* And what is the matter, that a good man, an extraordinary person, a prophet, yea, of all the prophets, a type of Christ, in whom our Saviour doth instance: that he is so much offended, and that he is so very angry? We may imagine, doubtless, some very great cause, something mightily amiss, and out of order: no less certainly, than one of these three things.

1. Certainly, here is some great *dishonour to God.* Here is some, sure, that declare for atheism, profaneness and irreligion, that hath so provoked the spirit of the good man. As we find good *Hezekiah*, he rent his clothes, and fell into a grievous passion upon *Rabshakeh*'s blasphemy, and reviling the God

of heaven, and comparing him with idol gods: *Have any of the gods of the nations*, ſaith he, *delivered his land out of my hands, that the Lord ſhould deliver Jeruſalem out of my hand*, Iſa. xxxvi. 18, 19, &c.

Or certainly, here is ſome uncircumciſed *Philiſtine* that is riſen up to defy the hoſt of *Iſrael*, which was ſuch a provocation to *David*, that, upon it, he put his life into his hand, and went out againſt him, as you read, 1 *Sam.* xvii. 39, 40.

Or certainly, here is ſome *Baal*'s worſhip maintained and applauded; which was a provocation to *Elijah*'s ſpirit, that he commanded them to be taken and ſlain, every man of them, 1 *Kings* xviii. 40.

Or certainly, one would think that here was ſuch a thing as *falſe worſhip*; which was ſuch a provocation to *Moſes*, that made him throw down the tables which were in his hands, in which were writ the commandments of God, and to break them to pieces, as you find it, *Exod.* xxxii. 19. Or,

2. Some great *enormity* or *departure* from the immutable and unchangeable law of everlaſting righteouſneſs, goodneſs and truth; that law of heaven, which is according to the very nature of God himſelf. As *Nathan* repreſented to *David*, a caſe, wherein a rich man ſpared his own flocks and herds, which were very many, and took the poor man's ewe-lamb, which he had nourliſhed up, as you may read, 2 *Sam.* xii. 1, 2. Prodigious cruelty and unmercifulneſs! yea, ſo great unrighteouſneſs, that at the very repreſentation thereof to *David*, tho' a perſon guilty, and he himſelf repreſented

by

by this ſhadow, as having highly offended God; yet his anger was greatly kindled againſt the man, inſomuch that he ſaith to *Nathan*, *The man that hath done this thing, ſhall ſurely die.*

Or elſe, certainly here is ſome ſuch thing as the *Iſraelites* meditated againſt the *Benjamites*, when they lay in wait to deſtroy them, *Joſhua* ii. 2. becauſe they had ſet up a new temple, and provoked the Lord by their folly.

Or ſomething like what St. *John* ſaw in his viſion, *Rev.* xvii. 2. *A ſpiritual whore, making drunk all the potentates of the earth, with the wine of her fornications*; true cauſes indeed, of indignation, and of juſt exaſperation. Or,

3. If neither of theſe two, at leaſt there is ſome dreadful *denunciation of judgment*, and ſome terrible threatnings, at which the very nature of man doth ſtartle and tremble, as you have our Saviour ſpeaking, *Mat.* xxiv. concerning the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, that there ſhould *not be one ſtone left upon another, which ſhould not be thrown down.*

Or, ſuch commiſſion as was granted to *Saul* to deſtroy *Amalek*, and not to leave either man or beaſt alive. And ſo certainly one would think that the prophet is moved by human pity and compaſſion, as *Zipporah* was at the circumciſion of the child, *Exod.* iv. 25.

Or certainly, here is ſuch cruelty as is practiſed upon the cities of *Ammon*, 2 *Sam.* xii. 31. where we read, that *David brought forth the people that were therein, and put them under ſaws and harrows of iron, and axes of iron, and made them paſs through the*

brick-kiln, &c. One would not think nor imagine leſs to be the cauſe that *Jonah* was ſo highly diſpleaſed, and greatly angry.

But here is the wonder; nothing that is any *juſt* cauſe; indeed there is no cauſe at all of any true offence, or real provocation: 'tis a ſhame to ſay what is the cauſe. The good man is diſpleaſed with God himſelf, and he is offended at the divine goodneſs and compaſſion, and that God hath reſpect to the repentance of ſinners; for ſo I find it, at the end of the foregoing chapter; *and God ſaw their works, that they turned from their evil way, and God repented of the evil that he had ſaid that he would do unto them, and he did it not*, Jonah iii. 10. And immediately it follows, that when *Jonah* underſtood this, he was highly diſpleaſed and greatly angry. But ſtrange it is, that he ſhould be angry at this; for this is a thing contrary to the ſenſe of the *lower* and *upper world.*

1. Contrary to the ſenſe of the *lower world*; for we find that the ſhepherd rejoiceth when he hath found his loſt ſheep, *Luke* xv. 5. and verſe 9, the woman rejoiceth when ſhe hath found her loſt piece of ſilver; and the father rejoiceth when his prodigal ſon returneth home again, verſe 20.

2. Contrary to the ſenſe of the *upper world*; for we read, that the angels of heaven, they rejoice at the converſion and repentance of one ſinner, verſe 10.

But we have now found the man, of whom it is ſpoken in the goſpel, that *his eye was evil, becauſe God was good*, Mat. xx. 15. He doth prefer his own conceited

conceited credit and eſteem, before the lives and beings of ſixſcore thouſand perſons; for ſo God himſelf hath given us the number of them, verſe 11. of this chapter: and I will ſay *conceited credit*, becauſe God himſelf hath given us to underſtand, that all his denunciations againſt ſinners are to be underſtood with a clauſe of reſervation; and he doth always except this caſe, *if the ſinner repent*. Though his denunciations ſeem to be poſitive and peremptory, yet they always include this condition, unleſs the ſinner do repent, as I will ſhew you by three ſcriptures for the preſent, among many, *Jer.* xviii. 8. where God ſaith thus, *That if he doth declare againſt a nation or people; if that nation or people againſt whom he hath denounced evil, turn from the evil of their ways, he will repent of the evil he thought to do unto them*; and, *Ezek.* xviii. 21. *If the wicked turn from his evil way, and ſet himſelf to obſerve my ſtatutes, and do that which is right in my ſight, all his wickedneſs ſhall not be remembred againſt him.* Again, *Ezek.* xxxiii. 14. *When I ſay to the wicked, thou ſhalt ſurely die; if he turn from his wickedneſs, and do that which is lawful and right, he ſhall not die.* Though God had ſaid it before, that the *wicked ſhould ſurely die*: but thus he would have it be underſtood, that if he forſake his iniquity, he *ſhall ſurely live*; and verſe 19. you have the ſame words. Theſe ſcriptures I have brought you for the encouragement of men to repent, and to leave off to ſin, and to return to their duty, and to convert to God, be their caſe never ſo forlorn and deſperate. For what can more encourage him, than that judgment ſhall be ſuſpended, and the re-

penting ſinner received unto mercy and favour. You ſee God doth make this declaration, even after his denunciation of judgment; if the caſe of repentance come between, then God is not bound to proceed. And for your ſatisfaction further, I leave this notion with you. There is a mighty difference between God's declaring himſelf in a way of *promiſe* and in a way of *threatning*: if he declares by way of promiſe, he is obliged to make it good, for by this he gives a *right* to the thing promiſed; and men may claim as good title from God's promiſe, though of grace and favour; for God is faithful, and he will perform what he hath promiſed: but if he *threaten*, here is no right acquired; for who will demand of God that he will fulfill his threatning? But to proceed.

That which makes the wonder the greater; *Jonah*, whom we find in this diſtemper, is of all the prophets the *type of Chriſt*; our Saviour inſtanceth in him, *There ſhall be no ſign given, but the ſign of the prophet* Jonah, *Mat.* xii. 40. I am ſure, in this temper and diſpoſition of his, he is no type of Chriſt; for our Saviour doth declare, that the Son of man came, *to ſeek and ſave that which was loſt*, Luke xix. 20. And he *wept over* Jeruſalem, when he did but conſider the deſtruction that was approaching: but this temper of *Jonah*'s admits of no apology. This ſelfiſhneſs that is in *Jonah*, and his preferring his own conceited credit before the ſafety of multitudes; I ſay, this admits of no apology. You may ſee it in five particulars.

1. That

1. That nothing is more *unreaſonable in it ſelf.* Should not finite and fallible creatures, (as the beſt of men are) having erred and miſtaken, if they return to ſober judgment, right apprehenſions, ſee their error, and diſclaim what they have done amiſs, humble themſelves, ask God forgiveneſs, and ſubmit to him, and deprecate his diſpleaſure; ſhould not ſuch find mercy with infinite goodneſs? there is nothing more reaſonable.

2. *Nothing is worſe for* Jonah *himſelf, and the whole world beſides him.* For, what ſhould become of us all, if there were no place for repentance? and for *Jonah* himſelf, how ſhall he be pardoned for his preſent diſtemper, if God ſhould not allow place for repentance?

3. *Nothing is more unnatural, in reſpect of his office*; for by his office, he was a prophet; and, was it not his work to promote repentance and reformation among ſinners? and ſhould this be without effect? But,

4. *Nothing worſe can be put upon God*, than to be repreſented implacable and irreconcileable. Will he have God full of anger, and retain it for ever? Would he have God forget to be merciful?

5. And laſtly, This would *render men hopeleſs and deſperate in the world.* 'Tis pity, *Jonah*'s notion ſhould be true. What, no place for repentance, and repentance without effect? what, all one with the impenitent and penitent? this is the caſe; but this is not the firſt diſtemper that we find *Jonah* in.

For, if we look to *Jonah*, chap. 1.

1. We

1. We ſhall find *Jonah* in great refractorineſs and diſobedience; God ſends him to *Nineveh*, and he goes to *Tarſhiſh*, Jonah i. 3.

2. We ſhall find him *ſtupid* and *ſenſeleſs*, and more blockiſh than the idolatrous mariners; and of them, they uſe to ſay, *None nearer death, none farther from God.* Theſe ſtupid perſons learned this in the ſtorm, to apply to their gods; and *they* came and awakened him with indignation, and ſaid unto him, *What meaneſt thou, O ſleeper? ariſe and call upon thy God; art thou not ſenſible of the danger that thou art in?* Jonah i. 5, 6.

3. We find him in a caſe of deſperate *inſolency*; for when the mariners found out that he was to blame, (for he could not avoid telling them) they incline to compaſſionate him, and rowed hard to bring the ſhip to land, but he bid them *throw him into the ſea*, verſe 12, 13.; for we have no reaſon to think that this came from the greatneſs of his faith; for we do not read any word of his application to God, or of his prayer, till he came into the whale's belly.

Take notice here by the way, that *Jonah* is not wrought upon by ſtorms and tempeſts, but he is affected with the ſenſe of God's preſervation. 'Tis ingenuity, goodneſs, and kindneſs that works upon men, that effects their repentance, and brings them home to God; and this is his courſe generally. *Deſpiſeſt thou the riches of his goodneſs, not knowing that the goodneſs of God leadeth thee to repentance*, Rom. ii. 4.

But

But for all this, we find *Jonah* in a bad temper, *Jonah* iv. 9. where God asks him, *if he did well to be angry*; and he ſaid, *I do well to be angry, even unto death.* Here you ſee he was refractory, peeviſh, and in a diſingenuous temper. But

4. We find him in a ſtate that is *unnatural, barbarous* and *inhumane*; for he deſired the deſtruction of ſixſcore thouſand perſons, body and ſoul, to ſecure his credit, and reputation of being a true prophet; as you may ſee by God's reaſoning with him, *Jonah* iv. 11.

5. All theſe his diſtempers are *aggravated* by his late *deliverance* in the belly of a whale.

6. He is not *overcome* by the declaration of the *reaſon of things*; no, not out of the mouth of God himſelf. For, God reaſons with him by a gourd, which he had cauſed to come up as a ſhelter for him; but he cauſed a worm to ſmite it, ſo that it withered. But *Jonah* had pity on the gourd, and he was angry for what had happened to it; and God made advantage of this, and improved it for his information: *Hadſt thou compaſſion on the gourd, for which thou didſt not labour, but it roſe up of itſelf in a night*, on a ſudden, and a thing of no long continuance, *and ſhould not I have compaſſion of ſuch a multitude of people?* Jonah iv. 10, 14.

And *laſtly*, The ſtory leaves him without any account of *returning to himſelf*, and to a due temper; upon which I ſhall obſerve this; that *in high iniquities and great enormities, we ſhould not be too forward to paſs a ſentence of abſolution upon high and great offenders.* Not that I will deny them the *benefit* of repentance,

repentance, but I would not have them have the *credit* of it in this ſtate; for it may prove but hurtful to the community, and contrary to the example of ſcripture: for ſo we find concerning *Solomon*, notwithſtanding ſo great things are ſpoken of him before his idolatry, yet afterwards there is no mention of him; ſo that we are left without any declaration of his ſtate God-ward. And *David*, after his great ſin, there is never abſolute teſtimony given of his integrity, but with reſervation. It is to the hurt of mankind, that great and enormous offenders ſhould have the ſentence of abſolution paſſed upon them. I do not deprive any of the benefit of repentance for the ſafety of their ſoul; but let us not talk ſo much of it, as to give them the credit of it; for this would be to credit their ſtate, which we ſhould not do, neither do we follow the example of ſcripture therein.

Now, to make ſome *obſervations* upon what we have been ſpeaking.

1. Let us learn from what we have heard of *Jonah*, to conſider, in how ſad and forlorn a condition we are, if God be not with us. Let every man uſe *Jonah* as a glaſs for him to ſee his own foulneſs in; and let us examine and ſee what hath been paſt, and if in ſome time of our life, we have not been in ſuch a diſtemper as *Jonah* here was.

2. Obſerve how *ſin multiplies*, and grows upon us, if once we fall into a diſtemper. Here is diſobedience, and peeviſhneſs and wrathfulneſs, and diſpleaſure againſt God; and barbarous cruelty, and inhumanity, and caſting off the bowels of compaſſion.

3. Take

3. Take notice from hence, of the *great danger of ſelfiſhneſs*, and ſtiffly adhering to a man's own ſenſe. If once we relax our ſelves from the rules and laws of action, and then humour ourſelves, ſee how we may be miſguided.

4. Let this be for *caution* and *admonition*; which is a very unhappy obſervation, That perſons acquainted with religion, if once out of the way of reaſon and conſcience, they prove rather more exorbitant than others; as we have ſad inſtances of it in ſcripture. When *David* had once broken looſe, we then find him idle, and from idleneſs to wantonneſs, from wantonneſs to adultery, and from adultery, to murder: we alſo find him, 2 *Sam.* xii. 31. practiſing cruelty, beyond the bounds of reaſon, contrary to the doctrine of religion and human nature; for had it not been enough to have ſubdued the *Ammonites*, but he muſt cauſe them to paſs under *ſaws and harrows of iron, and to go through the brick-kiln*; things which were never commanded him to do; and a man ſhould never proſecute revenge to the utmoſt. Thus we find *David* to do, after he had contracted the guilt of thoſe former ſins: and 2 *Sam.* xix. 29. we find him moſt raſh in his judgment; for a falſe accuſation of *Mephiboſheth*, he gives his land to his ſervant, and upon complaint made unto him, he ſaith, *Trouble me no more in this matter; I have ſaid, thou and* Ziba *divide the land.* Even ſo, when *Peter* had once broken looſe and denied his maſter, he ſoon after adds imprecations and curſings. I do not now inſtance in theſe failings of good men, but for our advantage; for the apoſtle hath told us that

all

all things that ſtand upon record in ſcripture, are *for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come*, 1 Cor. x. 11. Hence we are taught what great care a man ought to take, to preſerve his innocence and integrity, for theſe are a ſafeguard and protection to him; theſe give him ſecurity, and preſerve him in ſafety. A man doth defy ſin at the firſt, but when he is out of the uſe of his principles, which are wont to ſtay and govern him, he is as a weak man without a ſtaff. Principles of religion and conſcience, they are a bar againſt iniquity, whereby it receives a check, a ſtop, and controul: but if a man diſcharge himſelf once of the reaſon of his mind, or the rule of conſcience, we do not know how far he may miſcarry. If once the principles of religion and conſcience give way, and we voluntarily or negligently incur a forfeiture of our innocency and integrity, and by ſo doing, loſe God's protection, we ſhall be expoſed to all manner of evils; for theſe are as a dam, which once being broken down, all evils will flow in upon us: for, *beginnings of ſin, are like the lettings in of mighty waters*, which at the firſt might have been prevented, but if once it hath got over, twenty times as much will not ſtay it. So it is in ſin; while a man retains his innocence, there is a modeſty and ingenuity upon his mind, and that will be his preſervation; but if once a man, either by groſs neglect, or voluntarily doth conſent to iniquity, and ſo betray himſelf, he doth incur a forfeiture of God's protection, and caſt away that which is his greateſt ſecurity and defence; and this is the true account of that great impudence

and

and immodeſty that many ſinners arrive unto. For our better ſecurity, let us conſider,

1. That it is much eaſier to prevent, than to reſtrain ſin, and to recover a man's ſelf. 'Tis eaſier a great deal, not to conſent to ſin, than to lay any limits upon one's ſelf.

2. Let us be very *wary* and *cautious* of approaching evil; while we are upon our legs, and are ourſelves, let us be jealous and cautious of approaching evil.

3. Let us have no *ſelf-confidence*; let us not arrogate to ourſelves, as if we were ſelf-ſufficient, but know that our *ſufficiency is of God*, whoſe ſtrength is ſufficient for us in our weakneſs. And theſe are the advantages that I make of *Jonah*'s diſtemper.

Now to proceed. It is pity, that that ſhould be true which *Jonah* would have, that a ſinner ſhould in any ſtate be uncapable of repentance, even after denunciation of judgment; or that repentance ſhould not at any time take effect; and this *Jonah* would have had. It were a thouſand pities it ſhould be ſo, for it would prove the undoing of the world, and the worſt news that could be brought from heaven unto men; that there ſhould be an incapacity of repentance in any ſtate of ſin whatſoever; or that repentance, in any caſe, at any time, ſhould prove ſucceſsleſs and ineffectual; and yet, this is that which *Jonah* would have had. And he is a great deal the more to blame, becauſe he is wilful in his diſtemper: for in the text we find, that *Jonah* knew before hand, that if they did repent, God was ſo gracious and merciful, that he would revoke

2. That we offer to God in ſacrifice, *prayer-matter*. Let us look to the temper of our ſpirits, and the government of our minds, and our due intention. You ſee truth for the matter, may be falſe for for the manner. He brings this for an argument, that *God was merciful*; this was true for the matter, but a ſtrange argument for that which *Jonah* would plead for by it. The devil ſpoke truth in the ſcripture ſometimes, but always for ill purpoſe. That which *Jonah* would have had, would have undone him, and all the world beſides. Sometimes we wiſh and pray for our harm. Let us ſubmit our prayer to God; 'tis ſometimes better that God ſhould not anſwer us in what we pray for.

You ſee upon reading theſe words, a man would not imagine the caſe as we find it. For here we have a perſon of eminent priviledge; *Jonah*, who lived before other of the prophets (the certain time not certainly known) of all the prophets, a *type of Chriſt*. The prophet *Iſaiah* is called the evangelical prophet, for that he ſpoke concerning the kingdom of Chriſt very clearly: but *Jonah* had the advantage of being the type of Chriſt. An extraordinary perſon, a prophet, a type of Chriſt; yet a man exceeding diſpleaſed, and very angry, and that without any cauſe at all. For if you conſider theſe two things, you aggravate *Jonah*'s diſtemper beyond meaſure.

1. The *perſon with whom* he is diſpleaſed.
2. The *cauſe for which* he is diſpleaſed.

1. The *perſon with whom* he is diſpleaſed; and that

that is with God himſelf. He in whom all ſouls delight; he in the enjoyment of whom we have hearts-eaſe and ſatisfaction, and whom to enjoy is happineſs and eternal life: the light of whoſe countenance is better than life itſelf. Now *Jonah* is offended with God himſelf.

2. The *cauſe* of his offence. He is offended with God's goodneſs, he is offended with ſinners repentance; he is offended that repentance doth take effect. Was ever a man offended in this manner? behold here the infirmity of human nature! let no man be ſelf-confident or preſumptuous: let every man's mind be cloathed with modeſty, and dwell in humility. Let us all fear ourſelves, and live in the ſenſe of our dependance upon God. What prodigious creatures we are, if we fall into diſtemper? how monſtrouſly may we miſunderſtand ourſelves? and this is not only manifeſt from the caſe of *Jonah*, but is univerſally acknowledged. St. *James* ſpeaks of *Elias*, that extraordinary perſon, *Jam.* v. 17. That *he was a man ſubject to like paſſions with other men.* And ſo, *Acts* xiv. 15. *Paul* and *Barnabas*, when in the exerciſe of their commiſſion, ſo behaved themſelves, that the people were ready to deify them: but they acknowledged themſelves to be men of *like paſſions* with them.

Since then all is not true reaſon that takes place in the lives of the very beſt of us, it is to be wiſhed that we would be no where peremptory, no where ſelf-pleaſers, that we would not be dogmatical and ſelf-aſſuming; that we would not judge and cenſure one another; that all our paſſions would diſplay

themſelves in tenderneſs and compaſſion. In ſo doing we ſhould repreſent God himſelf. Pſal. ciii. 8. *The Lord is merciful and gracious, ſlow to anger,* &c. Iſa. xlix. 15. *As a father pitieth his children, ſo the Lord pitieth them that fear him.*

See then that you keep out of paſſion, if you would not ſhamefully miſcarry; and if you be in a paſſion, never believe yourſelves, or be confident of any thing you did, if not in calm reaſon. If in paſſion, review and examine; and when calm, conſider and rectify that which you did amiſs: you ſee you have reaſon from the miſcarriage of *Jonah*. 'Tis ſtrange that a man ſhould be angry and diſpleaſed with God; yet thus far did his paſſion draw him. Let us from hence know how frail and ſubject to infirmity we are. That ever it ſhould come into the head of a man to be aggrieved that there is place for repentance! and that God ſhould pardon upon repentance! and that God ſhould give over to puniſh when men repent! one would think, we ſhould be merciful for our own ſakes. Was not *David* raſh in judgment when *Nathan* repreſented in a parable what he himſelf had done? he paſſed a ſentence that he would not have had executed. That we may not forſake our own mercies, and paſs judgment upon ourſelves, let us be very cautious and deliberate, and eaſy to make candid conſtructions of other mens actions. Then how unreaſonable is it to be aggrieved at God's goodneſs, at ſinners repentance? *If a man be once out of the uſe of reaſon, there is no bounds to unreaſonableneſs*; once out of the way of reaſon, who knows what will be, or how far a man

will

will go? how deſperate a thing it is in *Jonah*, that he would have this ſtand upon record in holy ſcripture, *that God did refuſe to give ſinners repentance, and when they had repented, he did refuſe to accept them*; and yet this *Jonah* would have had upon record, clean contrary to the dealings of God. For we find when *Ahab* (who was a perſon that had ſold himſelf to do wickedneſs) did but repent and humble himſelf, God promiſeth, that *the evil ſhould not come in his days*; but by *Jonah*'s conſent, God ſhould not give way to repentance.

But you will aſk, wherefore do I blemiſh the reputation of a prophet, of a type of Chriſt?

I anſwer, whatſoever is upon record in the ſcripture, is for our admonition: we look upon him now, how he acts in his diſtemper, not to cry him down, but, by his loſs, to give ourſelves advantage.

1. Let us in this inſtance, ſee our own weakneſs and infirmity, and be modeſt and humble. Let us not brag of our own reaſon and wiſdom. Let us all know, *that we are ſafe only in God's hands*; and that if we incur a forfeiture of God's protection, we may extremely miſcarry; as we may ſee in this inſtance of *Jonah*.

2. Let us *preſerve our innocence*, and fear to fall into paſſion, beware of running into ſuch heat and diſtemper of mind.

3. Take care of *ſelfiſhneſs* and narrowneſs of ſpirit: the narrowneſs of *Jonah*'s mind, who ſo much valued his credit of being a true prophet, that the ſafety of ſo many thouſands ſeemed nothing in his eye; though herein he contradicted the very nature

of God, and his own knowledge: for, ſaith he, *I knew that thou wert gracious*, &c. And alſo, it was contrary to the expreſs declarations that God had made, that though he ſhould denounce againſt ſinners, and commiſſionate a prophet to declare the particular judgment; yet he is not bound to bring the judgment upon that place or perſons againſt whom he had denounced them, if the caſe of repentance interveen.

DISCOURSE II.

The PERFECTION of the MERCY of God.

JOEL ii. 13.

For he is gracious and merciful, ſlow to anger, and of great kindneſs, and repenteth him of the evil.

ALTHOUGH I have changed my text, I have not left my argument; and I have done it for this end: in *Jonah* we find the ſelf ſame words, but to a very unnatural uſe; by theſe words *Jonah* would juſtify himſelf. I therefore purpoſely left that prophet, becauſe I would not further inquire into his diſtemper; though it is of great uſe, that *Jonah* reports thus of God, who would not have it ſo. The advantages that I have made, are theſe.

1. That

1. That by taking notice of the miſcarriage of ſo eminent a perſon, that he ſhould ſo fail and miſcarry, we may thereby ſee the frailty of human nature; and this ſhould teach us to be modeſt and humble, and to live in a daily ſenſe of our dependence upon God. *Moſes*, the meekeſt man upon earth, ſtands upon record, that he ſpake unadviſedly with his lips.

2. *Jonah*'s diſtemper repreſents to you the danger of paſſion; how *Jonah* miſbehaves himſelf to God, how injurious and uncharitable to man, when in a paſſion! It is not ſafe for any man to believe himſelf, or to truſt himſelf, if in a heat. Beware then of running into heat and diſtemper of mind.

The *third* advantage that I make is, to recommend the ſpirit of the goſpel; it is always to be found in a ſpirit of love. Our Saviour, living and dying, was always in a ſpirit of love; and the firſt martyr St. *Stephen*, he exactly writes after his copy, *Acts* vii. 60. *And he cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this ſin to their charge.* Wherein he doth much exceed the teſtimony in the Old Teſtament, by *Zachariah*, who ſaith, *The Lord require it at their hands.* I cannot ſay, but *Zachariah*'s prayer was juſt; but St. *Stephen*'s was gracious. Theſe things are upon record for our inſtruction; therefore we are to take notice of them to make us wary, leſt we our ſelves be overtaken; and to make us tender-ſpirited, out of the ſenſe of our own fallibility.

This for a reaſon why I take notice of *Jonah*'s misbehaviour.

I now follow this prophet, *For he is gracious and merciful* &c.

When God paſſed by *Moſes*, he made this declaration of himſelf, *Exod.* xxxiv. 6. *The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-ſuffering, abundant in goodneſs and truth*, &c. And in *Pſal.* lxxxvi. 5. *Thou Lord art good, and ready to forgive.* And in *Pſal.* cxii. 4. *He is gracious, and full of compaſſion.* In theſe places of ſcripture, you have either all theſe words, or as much ſaid of God; and indeed, nothing is more true of God, than that he is the *firſt and chiefeſt good*; his prime perfection is goodneſs, and our trueſt notion of him is, that he is *almighty goodneſs.*

For what I have further to ſay, I ſhall obſerve this method.

I. I ſhall ſpeak in point of *Vindication*, and give ſatisfaction to objections that ariſe againſt this great truth.

II. I ſhall make *Explication* of the ſeveral phraſes in the text.

III. Proceed to *Confirmation* of it by ſatisfactory argument.

IV. To matter of *Caution.*

V. And laſtly, make ſome *Application.*

I. For *Vindication.* There are *three objections* to be removed, and then the heart of man cannot object any thing againſt this repreſentation of the divine goodneſs.

1. The ſeveral *inſtances* of *ſeverity* repreſented to us in ſcripture, and in other ſtories.

2. Some ſcriptures repreſent God very *terrible.*

3. The

3. The neceſſity of *juſtice*; for, as ſome imagine, it is indiſpenſible, and of abſolute neceſſity that ſin be puniſhed.

1. For the ſeveral *inſtances* of God's *ſeverity* in the ſcripture, which ſeem contrary to this goodneſs and great kindneſs of God to man. We have the inſtance of the deluge, wherein all mankind (except ſome few) were ſwept away with the flood, *Gen.* vi. The inſtance of the ſeven nations which God commanded to be deſtroyed, *Deut.* vii. 23, 24. The *Iſraelites*, when brought out of *Egypt*, led up and down the wilderneſs, and at laſt conſumed. *Nadab* and *Abihu*, for their inadvertency, in offering ſtrange fire, were conſumed by fire, *Lev.* x. 1. 2. *Uzzah*, in his good will, meddling with the ark without God's expreſs command, ſmitten dead, 1. *Chron.* xiii. 9, 10. Five hundred of the *Bethſhemites*, that rejoiced at the return of the ark from the *Philiſtines*, ſlain ſuddenly for looking into it, 1. *Sam.* vi. 19. The inſtance of the deſolation of the *Jewiſh nation*, Mat. xxiv. *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, who were great benefactors to the church, reſerving part of what they ſold to the uſe of the church, were puniſhed with ſudden death, *Acts* v. 1. &c. *Herod* who took the applauſe of the people to himſelf, died a moſt dreadful death, *Acts* xii. 23. And the dreadful deſtruction of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, Gen. xix. 24. To which I anſwer in ſeveral propoſitions.

1. It is enough to be gracious, not to be wanting in neceſſaries, for any ones good: and he that doth ſo, may abound in his courteſies as he himſelf pleaſeth. When neceſſaries for our good are afforded, and by any neglected, the blame lies upon them. 2.

2. Sometimes the ſins of nations and of perſons are come to their height, and God forced to puniſh.

3. The judgments of God in this life are *exemplary* and *diſciplinary*, Luke xiii. 3, 5. and 1. *Cor.* x. 6. 11. And better a miſchief ſhould fall on particular perſons, than that a general inconvenience ſhould follow.

4. God ſometimes lets us feel ſomething of hell, here, to prevent it hereafter. Chaſtiſements are exerciſes of virtue not effects of vengeance *Heb.* xii. 10. 11.

5. There may be a particular account given in ſeveral caſes.

I will ſingle out the hardeſt. As to *Nadab* and *Abihu*, *Uzzah*, and the *Bethſhemites*, *Ananias* and *Sapphira*; to theſe, particular reaſons may be given.

When *Nadab* and *Abihu* ſinned, the *Moſaical* inſtitution was but newly ſet up and when *Ananias* and *Sapphira* ſinned, the goſpel inſtitution was new. Now when a new law is ſet up, there is ſevere inflicting of puniſhment in caſe of tranſgreſſion. For if authority ſhould ſuffer it to go unpuniſhed, it would be underſtood and thought an allowance of it; and therefore did God ſo ſeverely puniſh theſe *firſt tranſgreſſions* of his new inſtitutions. Then, as for *Uzzah* and the *Bethſhemites*, we muſt conſider, that God had ſeverely plagued the *Philiſtines* (when the ark was in their hands) with emerods in their ſecret parts; and they not acquainted with the religion of the ark; therefore ſurely he would not paſs by and overlook *Uzzah* and the *Bethſhemites* who did know it. It cannot be imagined, that God would allow a raſhneſs and abſurdity in them, having ſo ſeverely puniſhed the *Philiſtines* before.

6. Though

6. Though we do not know what time or leiſure God will allow to ſinners to repent, yet we certainly know God will grant forgiveneſs to penitents; which is enough to declare God gracious and merciful.

7. If it be not the caſe of repentance, there is no other way for God's forgiveneſs; for this is the tenor of the Grace of God, *Acts* xi. 18. *Repentance unto life.* Acts v. 31. *Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Iſrael, and forgiveneſs of ſins.* Luke xxiv. 47. *And that repentance and remiſſion of ſins ſhould be preached in his name.* I cannot expect the ſubſequent act of forgiveneſs, where there is not the antecedent act of repentance, and converſion, and reformation. For what we have done amiſs, and do not recal by repentance, we are thought to ſtand to.

8. We cannot competently judge concerning the proceedings of God to his creatures, when taken in iniquity; becauſe we are not privy to the ſpirit in which men ſin. This for anſwer to the firſt objection.

The *ſecond objection* is relating to ſuch ſcriptures as repreſent God ſevere, by giving up to a reprobate ſenſe, ſtupidity and hardneſs of heart, *&c.* Pſal. lxix. 23. *Let their eyes be darkned, that they may not ſee, and bow down their back always.* And *Rom.* xi. 10. To give an account of theſe places in ſhort, ſee but againſt what perſons theſe are ſpoken; perſons that were contumacious, and reſolved to go on in an evil way: and where there is this caſe of wilful ſinning purſued with impenitency and contumacy; in this caſe I muſt ſay two things. 1. This

1. This caſe hath no promiſe. And

2. It is not fit for the exerciſe of grace and mercy.

1. It hath no promiſe of God. For the grace of the goſpel runs in this ſtrain; *repentance unto life, repentance and remiſſion of ſins*, Acts xi. 18. Never remiſſion promiſed without repentance; and this is the tenor of the grace of the goſpel, *Luke* xxiv. 24.

2. This caſe is not fit for the exerciſe of grace and mercy; for this caſe is not compaſſionable; for this ſinner would not have God to diſturb him; he would be let alone; he makes no application to God at all; he doth not deſire to be beholden to him. Now God cannot be ſaid to be wanting, though in this caſe he leaves men to their own hearts luſts, becauſe it is to them according to their own hearts deſire. For theſe ſinners deſire not the knowledge of God's ways; they chooſe the pleaſures of ſin, whatever follows upon it.

But if any ſhall ſay, or think, God may if he pleaſe, by an irreſiſtable power prevent all ſin and miſery: I anſwer, is it reaſonable, that God having made intelligent and voluntary agents ſhould force them, and make them do either this or that; ſo or ſo; whether they will or no? ſee what will follow.

1*ſt*. There would be no exerciſe of virtue, for all virtue is in choice. 2*dly*. No happineſs, for we ſhould be under force and conſtraint. 3*dly*. Of what uſe would our natural faculties then be? 4*thly*. It would alter the very ſtate of God's creation. It could be no probation ſtate; and it is the contrivance of wiſdom, firſt that we ſhould work, and then have a reward. 5*thly*. God hath made us of natures to be

other

otherwiſe dealt withal. God draws with the cords of a man, *viz.* perſuaſion and inſtruction; and if God draws, it is expected we ſhould follow him. God works with us, and it follows that we ſhould work out the affairs of our ſalvation with care and diligence. This gives you an account of ſome ſcriptures, whereat ſome may ſtumble. As that of God's hardning *Pharaoh*'s heart; *Pharaoh* goes on wilfully and impenitently to ſin againſt God, and reſolves to be ſtubborn; and God withdraws upon provocations; and with-holds his grace, and lets him alone; and this is called the hardning of *Pharaoh*'s heart. When men affect to be arbitrary and lawleſs, God leaves them to their own hearts luſts, and gives them over to vile affections. And this is the caſe accounted for in *Iſa.* vi. 9, 10. *Go and tell this people, hear ye indeed but underſtand not, and ſee ye indeed but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and their ears heavy, and ſhut their eyes, leſt they ſee with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and underſtand with their hearts, and convert, and be healed.* And this is referred to, ſix times in the new teſtament, *viz. Matt.* xiii. 14. and *Mark* v. 12. and *Luke* viii. 10. and *John* xii. 40. and *Acts* xxviii. 26. and *Rom.* xi. 8. Not that this is ſpoken prophetically, but ſpoken by the prophet firſt, and by the evangeliſts and the apoſtle afterward, referring to the prophet in the like caſes. For this is only what is conſequent upon men's diſobedience; nothing was antecedently intended by God. But to juſtify God in this caſe two things I lay down. *1ſt.* None are wicked through any neglect of God; but by their own wilfulneſs

fulneſs. 2*dly*. None are miſerable by God's contrivance, but by their own wickedneſs. So that God is free from the blood of all men; our deſtruction is of ourſelves, but our ſalvation is of God. So that thoſe ſcriptures that repreſent God terrible, are in the caſe of man's conſenting to wilful ſin, and continuing impenitent. God in this caſe, upon provocation, gives men up to their own hearts luſts.

For the *third objection*. The neceſſity of juſtice in caſe of ſin. This will be reſolved by a true explication of juſtice. *God's juſtice is the ſame with his integrity and uprightneſs*. Now theſe conſiſt with the reaſon of the thing, and the right of the caſe: theſe are the perfections of his nature; from which no action of God varies. But without prejudice to theſe, ſcripture attributes to God kindneſs and ſeverity; *Rom*. xi. 22. And theſe are limited and determined by his will; in reſpect whereof 'tis ſaid, *He will have mercy on whom he will have mercy: and he doth exerciſe loving-kindneſs and judgment and righteouſneſs in the earth*, Ex. xxxiii. 19. Jer. ix. 24. Loving-kindneſs that is of grace, the other two are of juſtice. But in regard of the loving-kindneſs of God, *he is maſter of his own right*; and he doth as he pleaſeth; for his grace is free, and his will is the law to him; and it is apparent that he hath done differently; as in the caſe of men and angels, *John* iii. 16. *God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten ſon, that whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life*. And then for the angels, it is ſaid, 2 *Pet*. ii. 4. *God ſpared not the angels that ſinned, but caſt them down to hell, and delivered them into chains*

of darkneſs, to be reſerved unto judgment. In the one caſe is his loving-kindneſs, and in the other his ſeverity. He exerciſeth judgment according to the law of his nature he exerciſeth loving kindneſs according to the law of his will. Now to bring this home to the caſe. I ſay, if God puniſh ſin where ſin is committed, it is juſt; God may juſtly do it, for ſin deſerves puniſhment. But we cannot ſay it is neceſſary that God ſhould puniſh ſin; for if you ſay that, you take away God's liberty, you deſtroy all acts of grace, you leave no room for repentance. *Juſt if it be done, but not juſt to be done*; for then it cannot be undone, but God muſt be unjuſt; and then God cannot pardon. If we affirm the latter, we may make a law for God. God may if he pleaſe remit and abate of his own right; for every one that is an owner may diſpoſe of his own if he will. They who receive not theſe things, I dare ſay, they are wanting to a ſolid foundation of their own faith. *It is juſtice in God to do men good, and it is goodneſs in God to puniſh ſin if unrepented,* ſaith *Origen.*

II. The next thing in the method of the diſcourſe is *explication* of the ſeveral *phraſes* in the text. In the text you have *five* ſeveral words; not that they denote ſeveral perfections in God, but expreſs divine goodneſs ſuitable to our caſe and condition; the ſame in God, but diſtinguiſhed by the quality of the caſe.

1*ſt.* He is *gracious*; which imports three things. 1*ſt.* So as to do good freely, without conſtraint. 2*dly.* Becauſe he doth good, above the meaſure of right and juſt. 3*dly.* Becauſe he doth good, without antecedent deſert, or after recompence.

2*dly,*

2*dly*. He is *merciful*; take that alſo in three particulars. 1*ſt*. So as to compaſſionate his creatures in miſery. 2*dly*. So as to help them, in reſpect of their infirmities. 3*dly*. So as to pardon their iniquities.

3*dly*. He is *ſlow to anger*; and that alſo in three particulars. 1*ſt*. So as not to take advantage againſt his creatures. 2*dly*. So as to overlook provocation. 3*dly*. So as to allow ſpace for repentance.

4*thly*. He is *of great kindneſs*; take that alſo in three particulars. 1*ſt*. What he doth, he doth in pure good will, and for our good. 2*dly*. Not in expectation of being benefited by us. 3*dly*. It is infinite, not according to the proportion or diſpoſition of the receiver.

5*thly*. He *repenteth him of the evil*; take that in four particulars. 1*ſt*. So as either it comes not at all: or, 2*dly*. It proves not what we fear and imagine. Or, 3*dly*. It ſtays but a while if it do come. Or, 4*thly*. He turns it into good. I give you but hints, and leave the reſt to your meditation.

III. The third thing in the method of the diſcourſe is *confirmation* of the truth of the propoſition in the text. There are four names and titles given to God that make this out.

1*ſt*. His *creation* in infinite goodneſs, wiſdom and power. This ſpeaks God to be full of goodneſs; for communication ſpeaks goodneſs in the principle. The variety, order, and fitneſs of things to their ends, declare the wiſdom of God. And to bring things together ſo remotely diſtant, *non ens* to *ens*, declares his power.

2*dly*. *Conſervation*, *protection*, and *government*, declare

clare God to be good, and full of loving-kindneſs; in which reſpect God works and we work; for we are all *workers together with God.*

3*dly.* *Reſtoration* and *recovery* out of the ſtate of ſin and miſery, ſpeaks God's goodneſs. When we were undone, when we had marred and ſpoiled ourſelves, God finds out a way for our recovery.

4*thly.* Future *confirmation* and ſettlement in glory and happineſs, the miracle of God's goodneſs, wiſdom and power. Theſe four things abundantly declare God good and gracious.

IV. The fourth thing in the method of the diſcourſe, is matter of *caution*, in two particulars.

1*ſt.* Not to *abuſe* this declaration of divine goodneſs, either by holding truth in unrighteouſneſs, or turning the grace of God into wantonneſs. *Having therefore theſe promiſes (dearly beloved) let us cleanſe ourſelves from all filthineſs of the fleſh and ſpirit,* 2 Cor. vii. 1. Should we abuſe his goodneſs, it were to produce an effect contrary to the principle.

2*dly.* Let there be no *haſty* or *raſh judgment.* If any thing ſeem harſh in the diſpenſation of providence, we may underſtand it in a little time; therefore he that believes ſhould not make haſte. We are in the hands of a good God; whatſoever the appearance is, undoubtedly this repreſentation of God is true, *viz. That he is gracious and merciful, ſlow to anger, and of great kindneſs, and repenteth him of the evil.* And although we cannot underſtand preſently, in the particulars, what God doth; yet it is undoubtedly true, that it is a mild and gentle ſpirit, and loving to mankind, that governs the world.

V. The

V. The fifth thing in the method of this diſcourſe is *application*.

1*ſt*. Here is matter of *information*. Then have we a true judgment of God, when we think of his greatneſs in conjunction with his goodneſs. Never divide his almightineſs from his goodneſs. It is very true, *no true majeſty without goodneſs* : yea, I dare ſay it, it is the greateſt act of power to commiſerate and pardon ; for other acts of power ſubdue things without, but he that doth commiſerate and pardon, ſubdues himſelf, which is the greateſt victory. General good will, and univerſal love, and charity, are the greateſt, both perfections and acts of power. To be ready to forgive, and to be eaſy to be reconciled, are things that are grafted, not in the wilderneſs of the world, but in the moſt noble and generous natures. They are under the fulleſt communication of God that give themſelves up to acts of clemency and compaſſion, and are forward to relieve, and to do good, to pardon and to forgive. Theſe are the perſons that are endued with divine power. If goodneſs and righteouſneſs were not in an unſeparable conjunction with almighty power, the whole creation were in danger and hazard ; and could not be ſafe, nor have any ſecurity.

2*dly*. Here is matter of *imitation*. Let us imitate and reſemble God. Afford thy fellow-creature that meaſure that God doth thee ; the contrary is an argument of thy not partaking of the divine nature. *He that hateth his brother abides in death*. And how ſay'ſt thou, that *thou loveſt God whom thou haſt not ſeen, and loveſt not thy brother whom thou ſeeſt ?*

They

They who are indeed acquainted with God, and naturalized to him, they live in a ſpirit of hearty love and univerſal good will, 1 *John* iv. 16. *God is love, and he that dwells in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.* The firſt thing in religion, is to have right notions and apprehenſions of God, what is true concerning God; *for we never ſhall be right in our ſelves, if we have wrong thoughts of God.* Therefore this is firſt in religion, to know what is true in God, and the next is to partake thereof; *i. e.* for us, in our meaſure and degree, to be what God is in fulneſs, height and excellency, wherein God is imitable and communicable. *Eph.* v. 1. 2. *Pet.* i. 4.

3*dly.* Here is matter of *conſolation* to all that are willing to do well, and would be good. They are in the hands of a good God; ſo that they may be encouraged, and their hands ſtrengthened in their duty. They have an account to give to an equal Lord; they ſerve a loving maſter. Who would not be engaged to ſuch an one, *who is gracious and merciful, ſlow to anger, and of great kindneſs, and repenteth him of the evil?* This is our great encouragement, that faithfully ſerve God, that if there be a hearty good will on our part, and an honeſt endeavour to pleaſe God; ſo ample and abundant is the grace of God, that it will ſupply all that is defective, either affording more ſtrength, or by candid conſtruction, or free pardon of all our miſtakes. If not by giving more ſtrength, yet by candid conſtruction of what is weakly done, but well meant; or by free pardon. *God is far better than we can conceive of him.* For 1*ſt*, He is infinite in all his perfections;

and we are but finite in all our apprehenſions, and conceptions of him. And 2*dly*. We are able through grace to avoid evil, and do good. And 3*dly*. Our imperfections are eaſily pardoned; *for God pitieth us, as a father pitieth his children. He knoweth our frame, and conſidereth we are but duſt*, Pſal. ciii. 14. Now this ſhould quicken and enliven us chearfully to obey God, and heartily to love him. I dare ſay, he doth not know God at all, as he is; nor is he in a good ſtate of religion, who doth not find in himſelf at times, raviſhings with the ſweet and lovely conſiderations of the divine perfections, *viz*. his benignity expreſſed to all his creatures, and his benefits conferred upon mankind. He that hath not a ſenſe and conſideration of theſe, and on whoſe mind theſe have made no impreſſion, he is devoid of all true knowledge of God, and I dare ſay, he is not in a ſtate of true religion.

But what I now ſpeak of, is not to impenitent and contumacious ſinners; none of this reacheth them. To them there is no promiſe, as I told you before; their caſe is not compaſſionable. If we uſe our principles of reaſon, we cannot put it upon God, to act contrary to the quality and perfection of his nature. The very goodneſs of God doth oblige him to puniſh impenitent and contumacious ſinners; and to controul and diſcourage ſin; for if goodneſs be the perfection of the divine nature, then it is ſuitable to him, to promote goodneſs in his creation.

Thus have I run over theſe things only ſummarily, wherein I have done you this courteſy, I have given you matter for your meditation.

DIS-

DISCOURSE III.

The Difference of TIMES, with reſpect to RELIGION.

PSALM XCV. 7.

To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

TO give myſelf advantage, and to command your attention; in the firſt place I will take notice how this place of ſcripture is referred to, and quoted in the new teſtament.

If you look into *Heb.* iii. 7. You will find theſe words brought in, *as ſaith the Holy Ghoſt, to day if ye will hear his voice.* What therefore is ſaid as conſonant to them, you are to look upon, to receive and entertain as the word of God, and as dictated by the Holy Spirit. For the words themſelves, there is much matter in them, and they are of great weight and importance. But I will only declare to you in ſeveral particulars, *That upon a ſpiritual account, there it great difference in time*; for *this* is ſuggeſted, as that wherein the *force* of the exhortation doth lie, *To day*, &c. And to make this out, I will ſhew you,

I. That *ſooner and later* are not alike in reſpect of *eternity*; and that the main work we have to do in time, is to prepare for eternity.

II. I will ſhew, that *times of ignorance* and of *knowledge* are not alike.

III. That *before* and *after voluntary commiſſion of known iniquity*, are not alike.

IV. That *before* and *after contracted naughty habits*, are not alike.

V. That the time of *God's gracious and particular viſitation*, and the time when God *withdraws* his gracious preſence and aſſiſtance, are not alike.

VI. The flouriſhing time of our *health* and *ſtrength*, and the hour of *ſickneſs*, *weakneſs*, and approach of *death*, are not alike.

VII. Now and hereafter, preſent and future, *this world*, and *the world to come*, are not alike.

And by that time I have given you an account of theſe particulars, and made it evident to you, that *all times are not alike*, for the purpoſes of eternity, and the concernments of our ſouls; it will appear highly adviſeable (conſidering the advantages of life, health and ſtrength, and the reference of time to eternity) for us all to lead ſuch lives, upon which we may ſafely die; and to employ ourſelves in ſuch actions as are accountable when we come to leave the world, ſince our welfare to eternity depends upon it. We are, I ſay, highly concerned, ſo to order our converſations in the world, ſo to govern our ſpirits, and lead ſuch lives, as when we ſhall come to leave the world, we may reflect with ſatisfaction upon what we have done, as good *Hezekiah* did, 1 *Kings* xx. 3, 4. when the meſſage came to him that he ſhould die and not live, he turned

turned his face to the wall, and ſaid, *I beſeech thee, O Lord, to remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy ſight.* If we do not conſider this, we ſhall be wanting to the true intereſt of our immortal ſouls. We often read in ſcripture, of *hardneſs of heart*; which is nothing but want of conſideration: for *Mark* vi. 52. we read, that *they conſidered not the miracle of the loaves, for their heart was hardned*: and *Exod.* vii. 23. we read that *Pharaoh* did not ſet his heart to conſider things. But briefly to ſpeak to theſe particulars.

I. *Sooner* and *later* are not alike upon a ſpiritual account. For the time of life is the day of exerciſe and time of work for God, and for the publick: for God and the publick have a due of ſervice from us all; for we came not into the world to gratify ſenſe, and to ſerve our luſts, but to ſerve God and the publick, not to promote our own ends and little deſigns, but the common good, and as we would not neglect our duty, ſo we muſt not miſpend our time. We are to be doing our duty to God, ourſelves and others, as ſoon as we come to the uſe of reaſon and underſtanding; for motion of religion doth begin with reaſon; and ſo ſoon as a man is able to make uſe of reaſon and judgment, he ought to put himſelf upon motion of religion, for we are as capable of religion, as we are of reaſon; and indeed no man can uſe his reaſon as he ought but religion will be predominant with him, and over-rule all his motions. *Solomon* ſaith, *Prov.* xvi. 3. *That the hoary head is a crown of glory*; but how? *if it be found in the way of righteouſneſs*; that is,

is, if a man hath uſed himſelf all his days, from the time he came to the uſe of reaſon, to the time of old age, in ways of religion, his *grey hairs will be a crown of glory to him.* 'Tis of great advantage to begin well, for ſo ſaith *Solomon*, Prov. xxii. 6. *Train up a child in the way that he ſhould go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.* 'Tis true indeed that ſome do degenerate; for theſe *proverbs* are not to be taken ſtrictly, but only to ſignify what is moſt common and likely, and what is to be expected; and *this* is of that nature; and doth ſhew a man to be the greater ſinner if he depart from a good way that he was early brought into. For we eaſily do what we have been bred unto, and uſed to do. It is true, that ſerious repentance, whereſoever it is, doth alter the caſe; but then you muſt know, that late repentance is ſeldom true; and this I am very ſure of, that there is little or no proof of late repentance, becauſe there is not opportunity to act. And they do mightily abuſe themſelves, that put off their repentance with hopes of being like the *penitent thief*, who begun ill, but ended well. But pray conſider, that this was an extraordinary caſe, a miraculous work of God's grace; and ſuch as we cannot expect the like again, till the Saviour of the world ſhall come again, and ſuffer. And the apoſtle tells us, that there can be no more ſacrifice for ſin than that which hath been already offered. Others there are that do abuſe that paſſage in the xx. of *Mat.* where we read, that *the Lord of the vineyard went forth to hire labourers into his vineyard, and took ſome at the laſt hour of the day.* But here I will obſerve four things.

1. That

1. That they which were hired late, ſtood all that time in the market-place in *expectation*.

2. They were no ſooner hired, and appointed, but they went into the *vineyard*.

3. They had *no plea* at all for the wages of a day. For it was ſaid unto them, *I will give you what is right*. Not the wages of a day: that was left wholly to the Lord's good pleaſure.

4. It was *beyond their expectation*, or at leaſt beyond the common ground of expectation. And we find their fellow-labourers were not ſatisfied in it, that *they* ſhould have the recompence of a days work when they had not done the work of a day. Therefore let us not be ſo much miſtaken, as to think we may defer the work of repentance, and making proviſion for eternity, till the laſt. They which do ſo, little underſtand what ſanctification imports; what reconciliation with the nature, mind, and will of God, and the law of heaven, doth ſignify. No leſs than this can we underſtand by it, to glorify God by a holy and unblameable converſation, and to do good, and ſerve God in our generations. For *heaven is more a ſtate and temper, than a place*. That for the firſt: *ſooner* and *later* are not alike.

II. Times of *ignorance* and of *knowledge*, are not alike: for, the time of ignorance, that is as *the night, in which no man can work*, John iv. 4. And the apoſtle tells us, *Acts* xvii. 30. That, *theſe times of ignorance God winked at*. And that *if they had been blind, they ſhould have had no ſin*, John ix. 41. which you are not to underſtand abſolutely, that thoſe that are ignorant and ſtupid are not guilty; but that they

are

are not ſo great ſinners as thoſe which pretend to know. And therefore it is ſaid, that *their ſin remaineth*, that is, it doth remain with all manner of aggravation. For you cannot ſay more or worſe of any man, than that he doth evil knowingly, and againſt his conſcience. It is univerſally acknowledged, that ignorance doth greatly excuſe, and therefore we have charity for idiots; and where men have never heard and are without the pale of the church, we leave them to God's mercy, and exclude them not. But it is quite otherwiſe where men are *a law to themſelves*, as the apoſtle ſpeaks, *Rom.* ii. 14.

There are three things in which every man that is born into the world, and hath the uſe of reaſon, is a law unto himſelf; and if he do not obſerve that law in thoſe particulars, he will be ſelf-condemned and neither himſelf nor any other man can juſtify him.

1. As to the point of *ſobriety* and *temperance*. That we do moderate our appetites, and not abuſe ourſelves, through exceſſive and inordinate uſe of the things of this life.

2. A man is a law to himſelf as to *juſtice* and *righteouſneſs*. And he will be ſelf-condemned if he do not uſe fairneſs and equal dealing with other men: ſuch as he would himſelf receive from others, he is obliged to give. If a man fail in theſe particulars, he goes againſt the law that is connatural to him, and would be ſelf-condemned though he had no other revelation from God, and had never heard of the bible.

3. A man is a *law to himſelf* in reſpect of that *fear*

fear and *reverence* which he owes to *God.* For a man knows nothing more certainly, than that he was not original to his own being, and that he did not make himſelf; but that he was brought into being by ſome agent, that was more able, wiſe, and powerful than himſelf. For he that knows how unable he is to continue himſelf in being, cannot but know that he did not bring himſelf into being but that he owes his being to another; and that he ought to fear, reverence, and adore him from whom he received it, and if he do it not, he muſt condemn himſelf. Therefore I am ſure there is no man ſhall be condemned by God, that is not firſt condemned by himſelf, in ſome or other of theſe particulars that I have named. In ſome other, and *leſſer matters*, there may be invincible ignorance, and this may excuſe in thoſe particulars; but in the great matters of religion and conſcience, there is no invincible ignorance. If men are at any loſs as to theſe things I have named; their ignorance is affected, and 'tis through groſs ſelf-neglect, and practice contrary to knowledge. And in theſe caſes their guilt is aggravated, and their caſe is not compaſſionable. And that for the ſecond. Times of *ignorance*, and the times of *knowledge* are not alike.

III. Before and after *voluntary commiſſion of ſin*, is not alike, upon a ſpiritual account. It is not imaginable the loſs that a man ſuſtains by conſenting to iniquity; how much he ſpoils his principle, mars his ſpirit, and ſpoils his parts. This you have acknowledged in the counſel of *Achitophel*, which he gives to *Abſalom*, which is called the *good counſel* of *Achitophel*

Achitophel, 2 *Sam.* xvii. 14. Not that it was good in itſelf, for it was as wicked counſel as ever was given: for he adviſeth *Abſalom* to do a vile fact to confirm himſelf in his rebellion againſt his father, and to remove the boundaries of good and evil; than which there is not a more deſperate undertaking. For a man under pretence of power to controul the rule of right, the meaſures of heaven, is to divert things from their natures, and to change their natural courſe; which is as monſtrous in morals as in naturals. The mind uncorrupted is a tender thing, and ſuffers moſt by violence, and unnatural uſe. The ſcripture ſpeaks of hardneſs of heart, as a moſt monſtrous ſtate, *Jer.* xiii. 23. *Can the ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his ſpots?* Theſe things are naturally impoſſible. No more can one that hath abuſed himſelf, and made havock of conſcience, by accuſtoming himſelf to do evil, learn to do well, without the eſpecial grace and favour of God. The coming in of ſin is like the coming in of water: it may be ſtopped by a little turf at the firſt; but if it once find a way over, it breaks down all before it. It is much eaſier to retain innocence than to recover a man's ſelf. If a man will venture to do that which is not fit to be done, no body knows where he will end. The practice of iniquity makes men ſhameleſs and impudent; the devil is eaſily let in, but hardly got out. Let us therefore take heed how we betray ourſelves, and give way to iniquity. Let us approve ourſelves to our *home-God*. Conſcience is always ready to ſpeak to us; let our ear be always ready to hear what it hath to ſay, and be very careful

ful never to depart from its counſel, in going againſt the ſenſe of our own minds and judgment. When once a man hath conſented to do that which is baſe and unworthy, as he hath made havock of his own conſcience, ſo he hath broken his credit, which is a further ſecurity, and great preſervative againſt evil.

IV. Before and after contracted *evil habits*, by frequent uſe and repeated acts of evil, is not alike, as to the concerns of eternity. *Men are more what they are uſed to, than what they are born to*; for cuſtom is a ſecond nature. Every man *hath himſelf as he uſeth himſelf.* When men loſe all government of themſelves, they ſoon contract hardneſs and an injudicious mind; an undiſcerning mind, or as it is rendred *Rom.* i. 28. A *reprobate mind* and *conſcience.* The mind by abuſe of itſelf, or groſs ſelf-neglect, may come to be as ſalt that hath loſt its ſavour: ſo the mind loſes its power of judging and diſcerning, and of reproving and controuling. The apoſtle ſpeaks of ſome that had *their conſciences ſeared as with a hot iron*, 1 Tim. iv. 2. by reaſon whereof they loſe all ſenſe and judgment; and then 'tis no wonder that nothing will work upon them, becauſe, as the apoſtle ſpeaks, *Eph.* iv. 19. *They are paſt feeling*; which caſe is repreſented by the prophet, *Iſa.* vi. 9. *Make the heart of this people fat, and their ears heavy, that they may not hear.* And there is no place in all the ſcripture ſo often referred to as this place; it is referred to by all the evangeliſts, and in the acts of the apoſtles, and in the epiſtle to the *Romans.* And when this is the caſe, that men have groſly neglected or abuſed themſelves, and brought themſelves by

by wicked practices into the love of ſin and vice and diſlike of goodneſs; then it comes to paſs with them that *ſeeing, they ſee not, and do not perceive; and hearing, they hear, and do not underſtand.* And this place is no leſs than ſix times referred to in the new teſtament, as giving an account of this place of the prophet. We many times wonder to ſee men act ſo contrary to all advice and counſel, to all ſober judgment, and to plain ſcripture, againſt the true intereſts of their ſouls, and bodily health, to the conſuming of their eſtates, ruin of their credits, to the undoing of their families; and all this without any manner of profit or advantage; ſo that a man may ſay to them as the apoſtle, *Gal.* iii. 1. *Who hath bewitched you?* to ſee men run on ſo deſperately, and to diſclaim all rules of government, and to practiſe without any manner of conſideration: not to be limited by right and juſtice, againſt all advice and counſel, againſt all threatnings too, having neither the fear of God, or regard to man: one would think they are beſotted, and act like mad-men. But this is the account: they have brought themſelves into an unnatural eſtate; and are not now as God brought them into the world, nor like to continue ſo long here as they might have done. But as the wiſe man ſaith, *Ecc.* vii. 17. *Be not overmuch wicked, neither be thou fooliſh, why ſhouldeſt thou die before thy time?* for want of ſelf-government the wicked are like to die before their time, and often by their own hands too. How ſhall theſe men give an account of themſelves, when they had a fairer allowance of time, and would not uſe it? How odious are thoſe

that

that lay violent hands upon themſelves? the law doth not allow them the common place of burial. Now all intemperance is of the ſame nature. Though men do not intend it, yet they take a courſe to ſhorten their days, and their ſin goes before hand unto judgment. A man would think that rational nature ſhould not be ſo depraved; but that we have woful experience of it. Inſomuch that the prophet, *Jer.* vi. 15. ſays of ſome, *were they aſhamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not aſhamed, neither could they bluſh.* All ſhame is laid aſide, and that which is the governor of man, conſtituted by God, reaſon and underſtanding is dethroned, and brutiſh ſenſe ſet up in its ſtead, and men give up themſelves to paſſion, malice, envy, fury, and revenge; and are inſolent, arrogant, haughty, and unreaſonable; whereas God made no ſuch, nor ever brought any ſuch order into the world. Theſe men came into the world upon the ſame terms with other men; but they have made themſelves ſuch by abuſe of themſelves. And now they will tell you, they *cannot do otherwiſe*; they *cannot*; why? becauſe they have contracted evil habits, by ill uſe, cuſtom, and practice; and are not willing to be at the pains to work them off; which through the grace of God, and by a little violence to themſelves at the beginning, they might effect.

V. The times of God's *gracious viſitation* in mercy and kindneſs to men's ſouls; theſe are not like thoſe times wherein *God ſuffers men to walk after their own ways.* And to make this out I propoſe three things.

1. That God is neither at firſt nor laſt, wanting

in

David; when the ſpirit of God was upon him, how doth he *defy the armies of the aliens*; but at another time, *I ſhall one day periſh by the hand of* Saul. A vaſt difference there is, when we are under divine motion, and when not; and therefore every man ought when he is in a good diſpoſition, and well affected, to follow thoſe impreſſions, for then that will be done which at another time will not be done.

VI. There is a vaſt difference between the flouriſhing condition of *life*, *health*, and *ſtrength*; and the hour of *ſickneſs*, *weakneſs* and *death*. In the former there is the vigour of nature; in the latter 'tis enough for a man to bear his infirmities. The moſt we can then expect to do, is to bear up againſt the pangs of death, and diſmal apprehenſions of it. And *he is mad that hath a days work to do when he is going to bed.* We ſee what great miſchief came upon one's being late on his journey, *Judg.* xix. the *Levite* being overtaken in the night. We muſt know that the work of converſion is a ſober, ſerious and deliberate work, and ought not to be deferred to ſickneſs and the hour of death, which is an hour of haſte, hurry and confuſion. It is the greateſt buſineſs of life, and of concernment to eternity; and ſhall we prefer things that are trifles in compariſon, and beſtow all our time, and thoughts and care upon them, and leave that which is fundamental to the ſtate of eternity to the laſt? eſpecially conſidering,

Firſt, That no man is ſure of warning, or of a moderate, leiſurely ſickneſs. Some drop down all on the ſudden, and never have the uſe of reaſon to

ſpeak

ſpeak a word; as they that die of apoplexies, lethargies and the like. Many die before either they themſelves, or they that are about them, are aware; but if they die not ſo ſoon, a man may be *non compos mentis*, through the height of his diſeaſe: and if not ſo, there is very great danger of deſpairing; if the foundation of hope be not laid before; for, take it for granted, *there are none ſo much in danger of deſpairing at the time of death, as they which have been moſt preſumptuous in the courſe of their lives.*

Again, the enemy of our ſouls, who hath been ſo ready to deceive us in life will double his diligence at the hour of death. So that, if we are not *now* able to withſtand his temptations, how ſhall we be able to do it, when we ſhall have leſs ability, and he come upon us with more force and violence.

Further, ſometimes men expect aſſiſtance from friends; but they may be abſent when we want them; or they may prove like *Job*'s friends, miſerable comforters. But if this ſhould be otherwiſe, it is then too late to begin a new ſcene of life, and learn the knowledge of religion; for knowledge is leiſurely gotten, and with difficulty; but however, *that* is no time for practice. If a man could be made fit for it, and taught in a moment, he hath no time to perform and exerciſe religion. The mind cannot be diſcharged of its ill habits in a moment, which have been ſettled by converſation, and the work of a man's life.

VII. And *laſtly*; *now*, and *hereafter*, the preſent and the future, this world and the world to come, are not alike, for the concerns of our ſouls. For now

is the time of working out our ſalvation; the next world will be for reckoning, and in judgment: As this life leaves us, eternity will find us. See therefore what great advantages we have in this day, and let us make uſe of them. We have the direction of holy ſcripture, which we may read as often as we will: we have friends and guides for the inſtruction of our ſouls; we have all God's inſtitutions and appointments, and the divine Spirit's aſſiſtance, and the goſpel promiſes to aſſure us that our applications to God ſhall not be in vain, if they be ſincere. But then for *hereafter*; what word of promiſe in all the bible, for any thing that is to be done by us hereafter? what ſcripture doth ſay, that that may be done hereafter which is now neglected? No; we read, *Prov.* i. 26. *That becauſe I called, and ye would not anſwer, I will then laugh at your deſtruction, and mock when your fear cometh*: and *Luke* xvi. we read of the rich glutton, that he is tormented; and poor *Lazarus*, that made an advantage of his poverty, and did his work in this world, *he is comforted.* If therefore we are real, ſincere, and hearty in our religion, we ſhall not put it off. Matters of weight and moment we do not put off at large, but we appoint a fit and convenient time; and if the thing be of concernment, we will appoint a time near and certain; for delays and put-offs are next to denials.

From hence, I infer,

1. That we are to *diſcern* the time.

2. That we are to *uſe* the time. And

3. That we are to *recover* the time which is loſt or miſpent.

1. That

1. That we are to *diſcern* the time. This was wanting in them, *Luke* xii. 56. *Ye hypocrites, ye can diſcern the face of the ſky, and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not diſcern this time?* This, as it argues ſtupidity, ſo it is a forerunner of ruin, *Luke* xix. 44. *They ſhall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee, and they ſhall not leave in thee one ſtone upon another, becauſe thou knewеſt not the time of thy viſitation.* This is an account of *Jeruſalem's* doom. To know time and ſeaſon in every profeſſion and way of living, is a principal piece of ſkill. No good is to be done in any way, if this be not underſtood, *Eccleſ.* iii. 11. *He hath made every thing beautiful in his time*, and *ver.* 1. *To every thing there is a ſeaſon, and a time to every purpoſe under heaven*; and *the miſery of man is great*, becauſe he does not diſcern this time, Eccleſ. viii. 6. Becauſe *to every purpoſe there is time and judgment, therefore the miſery of man is great upon him.* For the purpoſe of religion, the time of youth, and nature's ſtrength; the time before men are acquainted with evil; the time of God's aſſiſtance, indulgence, grace, and favourable acceptance, are moſt proper: theſe make the time properly for working. Elder years are attended with weakneſs and infirmities, which greatly indiſpoſe for action, eſpecially if we are to begin a new thing. This is rather a time of patience and paſſion, than of work.

2. That we *uſe* the time. That time is loſt that is not uſed; the virtue of it conſiſts in the uſe of it. The true improvement of time, is in the recovery of our ſelves by reconciliation with God: our

is the time of working out our ſalvation; the next world will be for reckoning, and in judgment: As this life leaves us, eternity will find us. See therefore what great advantages we have in this day, and let us make uſe of them. We have the direction of holy ſcripture, which we may read as often as we will: we have friends and guides for the inſtruction of our ſouls; we have all God's inſtitutions and appointments, and the divine Spirit's aſſiſtance, and the goſpel promiſes to aſſure us that our applications to God ſhall not be in vain, if they be ſincere. But then for *hereafter*; what word of promiſe in all the bible, for any thing that is to be done by us hereafter? what ſcripture doth ſay, that that may be done hereafter which is now neglected? No; we read, *Prov.* i. 26. *That becauſe I called, and ye would not anſwer, I will then laugh at your deſtruction, and mock when your fear cometh*: and *Luke* xvi. we read of the rich glutton, that he is tormented; and poor *Lazarus*, that made an advantage of his poverty, and did his work in this world, *he is comforted*. If therefore we are real, ſincere, and hearty in our religion, we ſhall not put it off. Matters of weight and moment we do not put off at large, but we appoint a fit and convenient time; and if the thing be of concernment, we will appoint a time near and certain; for delays and put-offs are next to denials.

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3. That we are to *recover* the time which is loſt or miſpent.

1. That

1. That we are to *diſcern* the time. This was wanting in them, *Luke* xii. 56. *Ye hypocrites, ye can diſcern the face of the ſky, and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not diſcern this time?* This, as it argues ſtupidity, ſo it is a forerunner of ruin, *Luke* xix. 44. *They ſhall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee, and they ſhall not leave in thee one ſtone upon another, becauſe thou knewe'ſt not the time of thy viſitation.* This is an account of *Jeruſalem's* doom. To know time and ſeaſon in every profeſſion and way of living, is a principal piece of ſkill. No good is to be done in any way, if this be not underſtood, *Eccleſ.* iii. 11. *He hath made every thing beautiful in his time*, and *ver.* 1. *To every thing there is a ſeaſon, and a time to every purpoſe under heaven*; and *the miſery of man is great*, becauſe he does not diſcern this time, Eccleſ. viii. 6. Becauſe *to every purpoſe there is time and judgment, therefore the miſery of man is great upon him.* For the purpoſe of religion, the time of youth, and nature's ſtrength; the time before men are acquainted with evil; the time of God's aſſiſtance, indulgence, grace, and favourable acceptance, are moſt proper: theſe make the time properly for working. Elder years are attended with weakneſs and infirmities, which greatly indiſpoſe for action, eſpecially if we are to begin a new thing. This is rather a time of patience and paſſion, than of work.

2. That we *uſe* the time. That time is loſt that is not uſed; the virtue of it conſiſts in the uſe of it. The true improvement of time, is in the recovery of our ſelves by reconciliation with God: our

minds being renewed, our loſſes ſupplied, and our perſons recommended. 'Tis an argument of the ſevereſt reproach and challenge, that a man is at years of underſtanding, and yet his mind is not informed; no rule of life and action conſidered and examined: this is to moralize *Solomon*'s proverb, *Prov.* xxiv. 30. *I went by the field of the ſlothful*, &c. Every one's mind is his field, and the ſluggard's mind is overgrown with thiſtles. A man may be aſhamed to have lived ſo long in the world to ſo little purpoſe; when his time is gone, and his work not done: wiſe for other things, only uninſtructed, or elſe careleſs in matters of the higheſt concernment and greateſt importance between God and their conſciences.

I may add, that time is burdenſome, if we have not employment for it. We have a phraſe, *To drive away time*; alas for its conſequence; *ab hoc momento pendet æternitas*; there is a reference of time to eternity. We ſhould be ſure to carry on our main work with the time; and if we be ſhort in circumſtances, not to fail in ſubſtance: let nothing leſs than this be the account of the improvement of time, that our minds are diſcharged of all unnatural diſpoſitions, whatſoever we have acquired that jarrs with the principles of God's creation in us; that we have gotten the victory of our paſſions, taken ourſelves off from fooliſh affections and fond imaginations, from being carried away after the guiſe of this mad and ſinful world: that our faculties be planted with divine graces, fruits of the divine Spirit: that we be in conſtitution

tion and temper, in converſation and practice, conformable to Chriſt's doctrine, through Chriſt deſtroying in us the works of the devil, and communicating to us the divine nature: that our perſons be reconciled, pleaſing, acceptable to God, through Chriſt's mediation and interceſſion. 'Tis a reproach to us to number ourſelves by years, fifty, ſeventy, eighty: theſe things being not done, in which the only true account of time is. Further I add by way of *caution*, notwithſtanding the difference of time.

Firſt, I tell no man (take him as I find him) that it is impoſſible for him to repent; for I know not the extent of God's grace.

Secondly, I ſay to no man, that if he does repent, it will be too late to find mercy; for I know not the length of God's patience, and repentance doth alter the caſe: but this I ſeriouſly advertiſe. If we will be true to our own ſouls, and not *forſake our own mercies*, let us take the advantage of God's particular application to us; then act, when God acts upon us. The ſacred ſcriptures thus declare, *Prov.* i. 23. *Turn ye at my reproof; behold I will pour out my ſpirit unto you.* Prov. viii. 17. *Whoſo ſeeks me early, ſhall find me.* Pſal. xxxii. 6. *For this ſhall every one that is godly pray unto thee, in a time when thou mayeſt be found,* Iſa. lv. 6. *Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near.* For this buſineſs of religion is no ſlight or perfunctory work; 'tis expreſſed in ſcripture, by what imports a mighty change, being made *new creatures*, not by tranſubſtantiating our natures, but by transforming our minds, and mending our tempers; by being par-

takers of the divine nature; by being created after God in righteouſneſs and true holineſs; not by being Godhead with God, but by being *renewed in the ſpirit of our minds.* By *perfecting holineſs in the fear of God.* By *crucifying the old man and his deeds.* By *purging ourſelves from all filthineſs of the fleſh and ſpirit.* By *putting off the body of ſin*: And by *mortifying the fleſh, with the affections and luſts.*

Can we reaſonably think that ſuch a work can be done in a moment, or in the moſt inconvenient circumſtances of old age, and the decays of nature, or on a death-bed? for is not old age burden enough, except it be attended with the ſad remembrance of a careleſs life?

3. *Recover* time loſt, ſo far as is poſſible, with double induſtry, care, and diligence, *Eph.* v. 16. upon this encouragement, *habenti dabitur*; to him that hath ſhall be given, and *ab utente non auferetur*, and from him that uſeth it ſhall not be taken away. Think that for this purpoſe, God hath ſo long continued thee in being. 'Tis ſafe to make the beſt interpretation of God's dealing with thee, which is to encourage application to him; for this is the contrary to turning the grace of God into wantonneſs. The credit of a good beginning is loſt, if we perſevere not in goodneſs. The diſrepute occaſioned from the vanity of the younger years, is abated by the ſerioufneſs and ſtayedneſs of the age of underſtanding. Since we cannot abſolve ourſelves from any ill uſe or abuſe of time paſt, conſidering the improveableneſs of time, and the reference thereof to eternity: let us carefully redeem that

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which remains; reſcue it out of the huckſter's hands; vindicate it to the nobleſt purpoſes, that the remainder of it through true improvement, may anſwer the account of the whole.

Nothing will lie heavier upon our minds, when we come to die, than that we have neglected the day of grace, been wanting to ourſelves in preparations for eternity, by bad uſe of time; depraved our minds, ſo as to go out of the world in far worſe ſtate and condition than we entred into it.

The *perſuaſives* hereunto are,

1. That here is *hearts-eaſe* and ſatisfaction in the motion of repentance; in that we have revoked, and morally voided that which ſhould not have been done. *The firſt beſt is not to have done ill; the ſecond, is to condemn it*: this is all we can do in the caſe, all elſe muſt be left to God; and this makes the caſe compaſſionable; and when the caſe is ſuch, there is nothing to hinder God to ſhew mercy.

2. *Entrance into eternity*, mainly depends upon the immediate diſpoſition of the mind; wherefore we are to take all care to depart hence in renunciation of the guiſe of this mad world; in reconciliation with the rule of righteouſneſs; in agreeableneſs of temper with the heavenly ſtate.

3. We have done a great deal of *harm* in the world, by bad example, ſtrengthning the hands of the wicked: let us take it off by renunciation of it, by condemning ourſelves in it, by giving teſtimony to truth and right; this is the leaſt that can be done in all reaſon; elſe we may be ſaid to be *alive to do miſchief in the world, when we are dead and gone.*

DIS-

DISCOURSE IV.

The JOY which the Righteous have in GOD.

Preached in the New Chapel, *December* 7. 1668.

PSALM. xxxiii. 1.

Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous, for praiſe is comely for the upright.

AND can we meet in this *new ſtructure* and *fabrick*, raiſed out of its former ruins, and not perform the duty of the text? If I be not miſtaken, this is the firſt that is again employed in ſacred uſe, ſince the diſmal and fatal fire. Let thoſe that are here preſent, give a good example to all that ſhall follow after; and let us now, as the text calls upon us, rejoice and triumph in the divine goodneſs, for praiſe is comely for the good and upright man. The remarkable providences, and happier diſpenſations of God, call upon us to be glad in the Lord, and thankful for his benefits. God hath not only given us leave to rebuild our ruins, and repair our waſte places, but he hath been with us, and given us encouragement to this good undertaking. We read that the *Jews* when they returned out of captivity, and had but rebuilt their walls, they had meetings of joy and triumph; as you find it among other

other places, *Ezra* iii. 11. and vi. 16. and *Nehem.* xii. 27. And this is not only pious, but a tranſcendant act of faith, and confidence in God; upon ſuch occaſions to bleſs him, to rejoice in him, and to praiſe him. And they are of the baſeſt, and moſt ſordid temper, that are not affected with the expreſſions of the divine goodneſs and kindneſs. And truly if we do not do the former duty of the text, we ſhall fail in the latter; if we be not glad and rejoice in the Lord, we ſhall never be thankful nor bleſs his holy name. For pray what thankfulneſs when the heart is poſſeſt with melancholy, and the ſpirit full of heavineſs? but beſides this, it is the general direction of wiſdom, to *acknowledge God in all our ways*; therefore in things remarkable, ſo much the more; and 'tis the effect of religion to do it; for what is religion, but a participation, imitation, and reſemblance of the divine goodneſs, both in the temper of the ſubject, and in its expreſſions of gratitude, ingenuity, acknowledgment, and the like. I know no other reſult of religion but this. And ſurely were religion eſtimated by *this*, we ſhould endeavour after it, and be all good friends, and he would be accounted the beſt man, that is moſt free and ingenuous in the ſenſe of divine goodneſs. At leaſt let us not neglect to make acknowledgments to God upon thoſe eminent advantages that the courſe of his providence doth afford; ſuch as are eminent ſucceſſes in our undertakings, and happy recoveries out of any trouble and calamity; and giving us to ſee light after darkneſs. Such opportunities as theſe, pious ſouls have been wont to cloſe withal. And it

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is noted of one, a very good perſon, a king of great fame, as a thing that was very unnatural and unbecoming him, and very ill reſented by God, that he did *not render unto the Lord according to the great benefits that was beſtowed upon him.* Thus it is reported of *Hezekiah*, 2 *Chron.* xxxii. 21. *But his heart was lifted up.* Now pride is oppoſite to the acknowledgment of God, and giving thanks to him. He that hath his heart lifted up, will arrogate and aſſume to himſelf, and this ſeems to have been his fault; for which wrath was upon him, and the *Iſrael* of God. Now let ſuch failings as theſe were, though in former ages, be for our admonition, as the apoſtle tells us, that *things before us were for our example, upon whom the ends of the world are come*, 1 Cor. x. 11. If God had not taken pleaſure in us, and in this great undertaking, to reſtore and rebuild this ancient city, he might have obſtructed and prohibited the ſame; as *Joſhua* did curſe any one that undertook rebuilding of *Jericho*. You ſhall find the curſe, *Joſhua* vi. 26. and in effect, 1 *Kings* xvi. 34. Therefore we have cauſe, both to be ſenſible of the divine goodneſs, in that his good hand of providence hath been over us, and given ſucceſs to our endeavours; and ſcattered our fears and ſad apprehenſions, and given us to ſee ſo much of reſtoration as at this day, and as this place gives teſtimony of.

In the text we have two things.

I. The *duty*: and

II. The *reaſon* of it.

I. The

I. The *duty* is expreſſed in two words, *rejoice in the Lord*, and *praiſe him*: and the *reaſon* in theſe words, *for it is comely ſo to do.*

Rejoice in the Lord. Then certainly religion is not ſuch a thing as 'tis repreſented to the world by many men. For it is looked upon as a doleful, troubleſome, melancholy thing; hurtful to the body and diſquieting to the ſouls of men. But ſee whether this be true. Look upon religion in its actions and employment: and what are they? *rejoice and give thanks.* Are not theſe actions that are grateful and delightful? what doth tranſcend divine joy and ingenuous acknowledgments? But then.

II. The *reaſon. It is comely.* Whatſoever is the true product of religion, is graceful, beautiful, and lovely. There is nothing in religion that is diſhonourable, ſelfiſh; that is particular, and narrow-ſpirited. No, it is a principle of the greateſt nobleneſs, and generouſneſs in the world. They are worldly ſpirits, that are low, narrow, and contracted: the truly religious are moſt noble and generous; and are the freeſt from narrowneſs, diſcontent and ſelfiſhneſs. There is the moſt ſolid peace, and moſt grounded ſatisfaction found in it. *Job.* x. 5. *The triumph of the wicked is ſhort, and the joy of the hypocrite is but for a moment.* But for the good man and the righteous, *Pſal.* iv. 7. *Thou haſt put more gladneſs into my heart, than when their corn, and wine, and oil encreaſed.* And *Iſa.* xiv. 16. *I will glory in the holy One of Iſrael.* And *Iſa.* lxi. 10. *I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, and my ſoul ſhall be joyful in my God.* Nay, in the greateſt ſtraits and exigency,

Hab.

Hab. iii. 17. *Though the fig-tree ſhould not bloſſom, though there ſhould be no fruit in the vine, and the labour of the olive ſhould fail,* &c. *yet will I rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of my ſalvation.*

I. *Rejoice in the Lord.*

1. For *himſelf*; becauſe of his own goodneſs.

2. In *other things*, with reſpect to him. But

1. For *himſelf*. 1*ſt*. God is the moſt excellent object in the world. And 2*dly*, what he is in himſelf, he *is to the righteous*, who have intereſt in him, and who are in reconciliation with him. 'Tis vanity and emptineſs to glory in men, and ordinary things, and where there is no property; though things are excellent, yet there is no glory in that caſe. Men are prone to envy; therefore it is requiſite to glorying, that men have property, that men think upon God as their *own*; for where men have no property, they are apt to ſay, *what am I the better?* The deviliſh nature delights in God, the leſs, becauſe of his goodneſs; for the more good God is, the further is he removed from their degenerate temper 'Tis our unſuitableneſs and unlikeneſs to God, that hinders our delight and ſatisfaction in him. 'Tis a great ſaying, *Whoſoever is pleaſed with God, pleaſeth God.* Whoſoever, I ſay, is pleaſed with that which God is pleaſed with, is pleaſing unto God. But they that are in an unſuitable temper and diſpoſition, (as the unregenerate man, and ſenſual ſpirit, as the atheiſtical and profane, and thoſe that are malicious and deviliſh) they are in a ſpirit oppoſite to the Spirit of God, and therefore they are offended with God, as well

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as God is offended with them : but, *whoſoever are pleaſed with God, God is pleaſed with them :* but to the wicked and unregenerate, God himſelf (as good as he is) he is a burden ; for it is the temper of wickedneſs to ſay unto God, *Depart from us, for we do not deſire the knowledge of thy ways*, Job xxi. 14. For it is univerſally true, that things are to perſons, according as they are in ſtate, ſpirit, and temper. Let men pretend love to the things of God never ſo much, they will not reliſh them, unleſs they be born of God : 'tis they that are naturalized to heaven, that reliſh and ſavour divine things. That which is born of the world, is enmity againſt God. But

2. Our rejoicing muſt be with ſome reſpect to God ; and though it be in *other things*, yet it muſt be in the Lord : and this is done, when

1. We acknowlege God originally, as the *fountain* from whence all good things come, and the firſt cauſe of all good. When we are ſenſible that we receive from him, and hold of him, and have what we enjoy, from his bounty.

2. When we account *God better than all* other enjoyments whatſoever, and have all things in ſubordination to him.

3. When we look upon all our enjoyments as fruits of the divine goodneſs, and conſider them as enjoyments,

Firſt, To *endear God* to us, and

Secondly, Of *obliging us to God.* For you know, a courteſy is accounted as loſt, if the party doth not gain the good-will and affection of the perſon, to whom

whom he ſhewed kindneſs. Even ſo it is in reſpect of God; if God be not endeared to us by his kindneſs, and we obliged to him for his goodneſs, all is loſt. But

4. We then may be ſaid to *rejoice in the Lord*, when we make God the *final end*, and make all things ſubſervient to his glory; and account ourſelves bound to diſpoſe of what he gives us according to his appointment, and for the ends of virtue. And to this purpoſe, that we may rejoice in the good things, that through providence we do enjoy, with ſome reſpect to God; two things are neceſſary.

1. It is neceſſary to give God *place* in the world.

2. That we *take pleaſure* in the works of his providence. For there is nothing that God doth, or that he doth permit to be done, but it doth offer to the intelligent mind, ſome *notion from God*, and cauſe ſome obſervance of God in the world; and doth give advantage to ſome divine contemplation, and ſo doth put the ſoul upon ſome action of acknowledgment and adoration of God.

To enforce this *joy in God*; I ſubjoin two things.

1. That joy is *neceſſary* to the life of man. The apoſtle hath told us, that *worldly ſorrow cauſeth death*. Sorrow and ſadneſs, melancholy and diſcontent ſpoils the temper of a man's mind; it vitiates the humours of the body; it prevents the divine, and hinders the phyſician. For the *divine* deals by reaſon; but this being obliterated, he can do nothing: for he applies himſelf to the mind and underſtanding; but ſorrow and melancholy hinders the receiving of true

true reaſon, and then his work is at an end. And it alſo hinders the *phyſician*; for if the mind be diſcompoſed by melancholy, it doth not afford due benevolence to the body. You have an inſtance in *Nebuchadnezzar*, who was by melancholy transformed into a beaſt: not that he was ſo by external form, but he did ſo eſteem himſelf; and things are as men conceive them. The ſour and melancholy, they are unthankful to God, and cruel to themſelves, and peeviſh in their converſe; ſo that joy and rejoicing is *neceſſary* in reſpect to ourſelves. But

2. In *reſpect to God*; joy and rejoicing is ſafe for us, and preſervative to us, as I ſhall ſhew you in ſundry reſpects.

1. If we have reſpect to God in our joy, we can never *tranſgreſs*.

2. We cannot *exceed*, nor any ways miſbehave ourſelves: we cannot do ourſelves any harm. For we read of ſome that have ſuddenly died, by reaſon of joy, at the tidings of good, as well as ſudden bad news.

3. Our joy will then be *ſincere* and *pure*, not frothy and fantaſtical.

4. It will *offend none*, nor be irkſome to any.

5. It will always keep company with *gratitude* and *humility*. For obſerve it in the text, they are made reciprocal, to rejoice in the Lord, and to give thanks unto him.

6. It will always leave us in a *good temper*; which worldly joy will not do.

7. It is wholly ſeparate from all *ſurfeiting*, drunkenneſs and uncleanneſs, and will free the ſoul from the *ſpiritual ſins* of haughtineſs, inſolency and ſelf-aſſuming. If our triumph be in the Lord, it ſeparates from ſenſual things, and from the ſpiritual ſins of pride and arrogancy: therefore let there be always ſomething that is ſpiritual in the ground, reaſon, or occaſion, or motive of your joy; ſome notion of God's providence in all your mirth. Sadneſs and joy are things of the moſt powerful influence in the life of man; the former breaks his heart, and the latter many times greatly tranſports him. But now an eye to God in both, doth poiſe and balance them, and makes the ſoul ſafe and ſteady under them. And ſo much for the former part of the text, *rejoice in the Lord.*

II. *For praiſe is comely for the upright.* 1*ſt*. Theſe words you ſee are exegetical to *rejoicing*. *Rejoice in the Lord*, for *praiſe is comely*. If praiſe and rejoicing were not the ſame, there were no argument in the words, *for praiſe is comely*. And then, 2*dly*. *Uprightneſs* is exegetical *to righteouſneſs*. *Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous, for praiſe is comely for the upright.* By uprightneſs is here meant our ſincerity and integrity, our honeſt meaning and true intention; which through God's gracious acceptance is our righteouſneſs. *We are, none of us, at all better than we mean:* our gracious God takes us by what we underſtand, intend and mean. And the truth is here, there is no diſpenſation for failure in intention. For miſapprehenſion, God doth grant allowance, and diſpenſe with human frailties; but for a failing of

intention there is no diſpenſation. Fail here, and you are *hypocrites*, and falſe-hearted; and therefore, uprightneſs is our perfection, and our righteouſneſs. For, either you intend well, or you do not; if you do, you are upright; if you do not, you are hypocrites. It goes mighty far in religion, that a man doth ſimply, honeſtly, and in plainneſs of heart, mean and intend God and goodneſs, righteouſneſs and truth. He is upright that means well: though he be in many particulars, miſtaken and incumbred with weakneſſes, yet he is righteous in the ſight of God, through God's gracious acceptance. Therefore it becomes us to be highly charitable, one towards another, ſince God is ſo gracious, and ſets ſuch a value upon our good meanings and ſincere intentions, as to account of this for righteouſneſs, either in practice or opinion. If a man, in the integrity of his heart, doth honeſtly mean God, goodneſs, righteouſneſs and truth, God will receive him. *Every man's mind is himſelf, and a man is what he means and intends*; *and what a man means not, that he is not, that he does not.* And this I have ſaid, becauſe in the text, there are two words made exegetical, *praiſe* and *rejoicing*, *righteouſneſs* and *uprightneſs*. *Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous, for praiſe is comely for the upright.*

This remains to be ſpoken to; and 'tis a gallant notion in this age that tends ſo much to atheiſm.

Praiſe is comely. This is ſpoken by way of argument; and 'tis no argument, if this be not true, that *there is a reaſon for what we do, from the things themſelves.* I mean this, and if you grant but *this*,

that there is that which of itſelf is good and comely, juſt and right, and there is that which of itſelf is ſinful and abominable; we exclude atheiſm out of the world: and this muſt be acknowledged, otherwiſe there is no argument in theſe words, *for praiſe is comely*. If all things are alike, and no difference of things, one thing is no more comely than another. Now becauſe this is an excellent rule, and a way to exclude atheiſm out of the world, I will ſhew you that this notion is abundant in ſcripture, *viz. That goodneſs and truth are firſt in things*; and though they are ſo in mens apprehenſions *ſecondarily*, yet they are ſo *firſt* in themſelves; and that men live in a lie, and are in a lie, if their apprehenſions be not conformed to things in their reality and exiſtence. Several ſcriptures have this notice: *Phil.* iv. 8. runs upon it all along. *Whatſoever things are venerable, juſt, honeſt, praiſe-worthy*, &c. How inſignificant were theſe ſayings, if all things were alike as men would have them? ſo *Rom.* xiii. 13. *Walk decently or honeſtly.* 1 Cor. vii. 35. 1 Cor. xiv. 40. *Let all things be done decently.* 1 Cor. xi. 13. *Is it comely, is it decent?* Eccles. v. 18. Pſal. xcii. 1. *It is good to ſing praiſe to the Lord.* Pſal. cxlvii. 1. *Praiſe is comely*, &c.

The reaſon of things is, that law and truth which none muſt tranſgreſs: I ſay, the reaſon of things is a law and truth which none, either by power or priviledge may tranſgreſs. And for this I will give you ſuch arguments for conviction, that greater cannot be given: for I tell you, *'tis a law in heaven, and that which God takes notice of in all his diſpenſati-*

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ons to his creatures. It is that which God will give an account of himſelf by, to the underſtandings of his creatures. For this I will produce many ſcriptures; *righteouſneſs and judgment are the habitation of his throne*, Pſal. xcvii. 2. Can any man underſtand this to be nothing but what is arbitrary? *Job.* viii. 3. and xxxiv. 12. *Will he by power pervert that which is right?* Rom. iii. 3. *Is there unrighteouſneſs with God? God forbid.* How inſignificant are all theſe expreſſions, if all things be alike and arbitrary, if the difference of things be nothing elſe but fantaſtical and conceited? and yet this and much more muſt the atheiſt ſay, or elſe his opinion is worth nothing. For if there be a difference in things, he will be ſelf-condemned. We have *Abraham's* queſtion, *Gen.* xviii. 25. *Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?* theſe were certainly preſumptuous, arrogant, and bold ſpeeches to be ſaid to God, if my notion were not true; for theſe conclude will, and ſhut it up, as having no rule in this law of right. So *Acts* xvii. 31. it is ſaid, *God ſhall judge the world in righteouſneſs.* If there be not difference in things, and a rule of right, theſe words ſignify nothing. I could quote you hundreds of places for this; *all the ways of God are ways of truth of righteouſneſs and of judgment.* Can any man imagine, that this ſignifies no more, but that things are as *will* would have them. Therefore I tell you, (and it is that by which you and all the world ſhall be judged) that theſe are not bare words and titles, not ſhadows and imaginations. There is that which is decent and fitting to be done; or that which is equal; that

which is fair; that which is comely and ſeemly: *there is that which holds of itſelf*, and is decent, comely and fitting. *Truth and goodneſs are firſt in things, then in perſons*; and 'tis our duty to obſerve them, and our uprightneſs to comply with them. All things are not arbitrary and poſitive conſtitution; but there is that which is lovely and comely in itſelf; and there is that which is impure and ugly in its own nature and quality; and if any man meddles with it, let him be ſure it will diſparage him, and render him contemptible, vile, and baſe. There is alſo that which is generous, noble and worthy, and will gain repute and credit to him that uſes it. 'Tis not all one for an intelligent and voluntary agent, to do one thing or another; for there are rules of right wherewith all intelligent agents muſt comply, and they do righteouſly when they do, and ſinfully when they do not. There is ſuch a turpitude in ſome things, that there is no priviledge or protection; nothing that can be alledged that will gain a man liberty to do them, for they have an intrinſick malignity and impurity; and theſe things are a diſparagement to any perſon whatſoever. And there are things that are juſt and righteous, worthy and generous, that will recompence the perſon that is exerciſed in them.

And then God made man with a judgment of diſcerning, and 'tis expected that man ſhould judge and diſcern, and reaſon concerning things. And this is not ſo much our priviledge, as our charge and truſt, to obſerve the difference of things. The whole motion of the world below men, is pulled upon

pon a moral conſideration; and no morality to be found in any agent below man: the motions of all elſe, are no better than mechanick. Now this is the foundation of ſcripture, exhortation, and admonition: we are to examine by reaſon and by argument, becauſe God applies to reaſon and judgment, and to underſtanding, which is inſeparable to choice and reſolution.

In ſhort, a man is accompliſhed by two things, 1*ſt*. By being enlightned in his intellectual faculties. 2*dly*. By being directed in his morals to refuſe evil, and to do good; and to chuſe and determine things according to the difference of them. The 1*ſt*. is the perfection of a man's underſtanding. The 2*d*. is the goodneſs of his mind, *Phil*. ii. 13. *Work out your ſalvation with fear, for it is God that worketh in you*, &c. This ſuppoſes a judgment of diſcerning; and then conſequently, that God does expect, that a man, according to his apprehenſion and judgment, ſhould chuſe, reſolve, and determine. Now where we are called upon to work in the affair of ſalvation; ſee how cautiouſly the ſcripture ſpeaks of it, *Phil*. ii. 12. *Work out your own ſalvation, for it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of his own good pleaſure*. From hence no body ſhould be diſcouraged from the ſenſe of his own diſability; nor arrogate to himſelf, or be preſumptuous; *for God worketh in him to will and to do of his good pleaſure*. If this notion were but well obſerved, a great part of ſome controverſies, at this day, would be reſolved; for ſcripture doth attribute to us that which God doth with us: that which we do

is attributed to God; and that which God doth by us, is both aſcribed to God, and to us; we work, and God works; we are awakened, directed, and aſſiſted by him, ſo that I think there is too much heat in many controverſies, and a right ſtating them would extinguiſh them from being in the world.

We ſee there is a direct and exact government in heavenly bodies. When did ever the ſun fail? It were prodigious if it ſhould: and why ſhould not *we*, that are guided by principles of reaſon and illumination, (which is a far greater communication from God) why ſhould we be ſo irregular and inconſiſtent, ſince the lower creation is ſo regular and uniform? For there is nothing of conflagration in the heavenly motions, becauſe no oppoſitions: and if *we* were uniform to principles of reaſon and right underſtanding, all motions with us would be ſo, and tend to mutual information and edification, but not at all to provocation, or exaſperation, one of another.

Pray let me leave this notion with you, that *there is a difference in things*; there is that which is comely, that which is regular, decent, and directed according to rule, and the ſtanding principle of God's creation. You ſee how much time I have ſpent in the notion, or that which is the force of the argument; we *are to rejoice and give thanks*, becauſe *it is comely*. The reaſon lies in the quality of the thing, which doth ſuppoſe, that *there is a difference in things*; by which the atheiſt is excluded out of the world, and mens liberties reſtrained to that which is right. 'Tis no rule to a man's actions, to do that which he

he may maintain by power and priviledge; but to do that which is fit to be done, *juſt* and *right*: to comply in all things with the *reaſon of things*, and *the rule of right*, and in all things to be according to the nature, mind and will of God, the law of juſtice, the rule of right, the reaſon of things. Theſe are the laws, by which we are to act and govern our lives; and we are all born under the power of them: and if this be not true, this argument of the pſalmiſt is inſignificant, *praiſe ye the Lord, for it is comely.* The reaſon of things therefore, is our rule, both in religion and converſe, one with another; and though theſe are different forms of ſpeech, yet they are always in conjunction. The reaſon of the mind is by theſe to be directed; and indeed, all principles of religion are founded upon the ſureſt, moſt conſtant, and higheſt reaſon in the world. *There is nothing ſo intrinſically rational as religion is*; nothing ſo ſelf-evident, nothing that can ſo juſtify itſelf, or that hath ſuch pure reaſon to commend itſelf, as religion hath; for it gives an account of itſelf to our judgments and to our faculties; and this. God himſelf doth acknowledge, *Iſa.* v. 3. *Judge, I pray you, between me and my vineyard.* So, 1 *Cor.* xi. 13. *Judge in your ſelves, is it comely,* &c. He brings that for an argument, the indecency of it. But ſo much for the notion, *That there is a difference in things; that good and evil are firſt in things; right and wrong firſt in things themſelves.* This is not arbitrary, nor imagined, nor determined by power and priviledge, but there is good and evil, comely and uncomely in things themſelves. A word of this particular caſe, and I have done. *Praiſe*

Praiſe is comely. It is nature's ſenſe, 'tis the import of any man's reaſon: every man's mind tells him that *this is decent*; and no man can have peace, quiet and ſatisfaction in the contrary; unleſs he be ſunk down into baſeneſs, and degenerated into a ſordid temper, he will acknowledge the kindneſs of his benefactor. Now, becauſe God doth infinitely tranſcend all the benefactors in the world, if any man doth not acknowledge his goodneſs, and praiſe him for his benefits, he is ſunk down into baſeneſs, and fallen beneath his creation and nature.

God loves us, and therefore he doth us good: we love God becauſe we are partakers of his benefits. Now praiſe and thankſgiving is all the return that our neceſſity and beggary is capable of: and it is very comely for us, that are ſo much beholden to the divine goodneſs, to make our due acknowledgments; and therefore it is obſerved that in ingratitude there is a connexion of all vice. All diſingenuity and baſeneſs are concentred in the bowels of ingratitude. He that will not be engaged by kindneſs, no *cords of man will hold him.* It is obſerved both by God and man, as degeneracy in its ultimate iſſue, the greateſt depravation that nature is capable of, to be inſenſible of courteſies, and not to make due acknowledgments. How often doth *David* complain of thoſe perſons, that were obliged to him by kindneſs, that they turned his enemies, *Pſal.* xli. and xlv. *he that ſat at meat with me, hath lift up his heel againſt me.* How is he repreſented by him, as a moſt ſordid wretched perſon, one that was degenerated to the fulleſt degree? and then God himſelf

ſelf complains, *Deut.* xxxii. 15. Jeſhurun *waxed fat and kicked, he forſook God that made him, and lightly eſteemed the rock of his ſalvation.* God and man complains of the ungrateful, becauſe all favours and courteſies are loſt. Yea, 'tis well obſerved, that it is the only way to make a deſperate enemy, to beſtow kindneſs upon an unthankful perſon. And this is too well known, that thoſe that have been made friends by courteſy, proving falſe, have been the greateſt betrayers. Therefore, of all perſons and tempers, the inſenſible and ungrateful are the worſt: yea, truly, theſe are the very peſts of the world, the enemies of human nature; they harden mens hearts, who otherwiſe were free to do courteſies, becauſe they do not know but that they may make an enemy. I will make this out (*viz.* the baſeneſs of ingratitude) in theſe *two* words.

1. Becauſe *nothing is more due to God than our gratitude*; for he *loadeth us with his benefits, and is pleaſed to pleaſe us*, and doth many things to gratify us.

2. By this we give *teſtimony of our minds to God*; for we have nothing at all to ſacrifice to God, but the conſent of our minds; an ingenuous acknowledgement. We have nothing to bring him, but the conſent of our minds; and this the grateful perſon doth, and by this he ſignifies, that if it were within his compaſs, he would requite the divine goodneſs; for 'tis not ſo much the gift, as the mind of the giver. He that is unthankful, is moſt full of himſelf, and apt to think that all the world was made for him, and that all men are bound to be his

his ſervants, and to attend his purpoſe, and that he may ſerve himſelf of all mens parts, powers, priviledges and opportunities; but he himſelf is exempt from all men; ſo that he is an enemy to God and men.

DISCOURSE V.

The ſecret BLASTING of MEN.

PSALM xxxix. 11.

When thou with rebukes doſt correct man for iniquity, thou makeſt his beauty to conſume away like a moth; ſurely every man is vanity. Selah.

NOTHING is leſs true, nothing more unbecoming us, limited, finite, and fallible creatures, than the thought of independency and ſelf-ſufficiency. And indeed, the whole creation of God, in compariſon with God himſelf, is leſs than the duſt of the balance; and if you come to compare, will hold no weight. Nothing becomes us more, than to know what we are: nothing befits us better, than that we know our own ſtate, and to be ſenſible of our own dependence and neceſſity, and to make due acknowledgement to God. If a man ſeriouſly weigh theſe words, he will always veil to God, humble himſelf, ſubmit, and deprecate. So many things there are emphatical in theſe words, *When thou*, &c.

Sin,

Sin, on man's part, is that that makes him much more liable and obnoxious to God, than he is in reſpect of his creature-ſtate: *when thou with rebukes doſt correct man for iniquity thou makeſt his beauty*, that that he values himſelf by, that that is his only thing, his top excellency, *to conſume away like a moth*, without any reſiſtance, without any ſtop, inſenſibly: ſo that he that doth contemplate what is ſaid in the former part of the words, will preſently acknowledge, that *every man, even in his beſt eſtate is vanity, altogether vanity.*

Theſe words give an account of two things which are the matter of the greateſt wonder.

Firſt, How it comes to paſs there are ſo *many and ſo great evils* in the world.

Secondly, How ſo many perſons come to wither and fall away, and come to nothing in the world. And theſe two are the greateſt matters of *wonder* and admiration among men.

Firſt, How it comes to paſs that there are ſo *many, and ſo great evils* in the world: and the wonder is this, that God governs the world, and God is known by his goodneſs: what, theſe evils from the hand of a good God! how can this be? the greateſt queſtions that have ever been in the world, have been theſe two.

1. Whence *evils* come? and

2. How it comes to paſs they were not *ſubdued*, as ſoon as they did appear; I believe it would puzzle the head of any one in the world to anſwer them; if he do not learn an anſwer from ſcripture. Now this place reſolves you; you have here God challenging

lenging, controuling and rebuking it. For if you find out the procuring *cauſe*, you find out all : not he that doth the thing, but he that was the cauſe of the thing being done, doth the miſchief.

Secondly, Then how comes it to paſs that *ſo many wither* in the world, with all advantages, honour, titles, dignity and eſtate, that they never ſpent their thoughts about getting; and out-live it all. Whereas you have others born naked into the world; and through the improvement of natures powers, they riſe to eſtates and revenues. How comes this to paſs? in theſe words you have an account. *When thou with rebukes doſt correct a man for iniquity, thou makeſt his beauty to conſume away like a moth.*

Theſe two conſiderations are enough to engage your attention: every body hath their ears open to hear reſolutions of wonders.

In the words you have *four things*.

I. What is *intimated*, and that is, that ſin is the procuring cauſe of puniſhment. *When thou with rebukes doſt correct man for ſin*, &c. Sin is the procuring cauſe of puniſhment. It is ſin that doth the world all the miſchief that is in the world. A fault deſerves puniſhment: the fault going before, doth naturally draw on with it puniſhment.

II. Take notice of what is *ſuppoſed*, that God doth regularly and uſually chaſtiſe ſinners. God doth, as a thing becoming him in the government of the world, he doth controul ſinners, and chaſtiſe men for ſin. The word is very remarkable, *When thou with rebukes*, &c. which intimates ſomething *in ſecret*: not only openly puniſhed in the view of the world;

world; but ſinners feel checks and reproofs from God, which unleſs they themſelves tell, others are not aware of. An *internal* ſtroke; for theſe rebukes are *ſecret*; though they are certainly felt by thoſe that are under them, by-ſtanders take no cognizance of them. *The torments of a* man's own breaſt are beyond any evil that befalls the body: trouble in a man's mind, is beyond the pain of the ſtone or gout. For if a man's mind be whole, he can bear up againſt bodily infirmity. *But a wounded ſpirit who can bear?* Prov. xviii. 14.*

III. Take notice what is *propoſed*; that theſe rebukes of God *blaſt* men: when thou with rebukes correcteſt man for ſin, *thou makeſt his beauty to conſume. His beauty*, that is, that which is moſt deſirable, that which is moſt valuable; his health, his wealth, his friends, his internal peace, the parts of his mind: for theſe are a man's excellency, and all theſe are meant by his *beauty*. And if God blaſt a man, all theſe wither away, and come to nothing: thou makeſt his *beauty to conſume away like a moth*: a moth is always fretting, not apt to be found out, not apt to be reſiſted, but brings all to confuſion. Theſe rebukes of God blaſt men.

IV. Take notice what is here *inferred*: *ſurely every man is vanity*. And no concluſion doth more plainly follow from any thing premiſed. For every man is *vanity* upon a double account.

1ſt, Becauſe he is *fallible*, and ſo ſubject to miſcarry; elſe he would never be found in the ways of iniquity, and

* Si dii deæque omnes, &c. Tacitus in Tiberio.

2dly, Becauſe

2dly, Becauſe he is ſo controulable and *accountable*; and under a power that he cannot reſiſt.

Thus I have given you an account in theſe four particulars, of the matter that lies in the words. And really, the text offers to you things of *great moment*, and weighty conſideration. I will ſpeak ſhortly to all *four*: and becauſe I will be brief, I will put the two firſt together, and they will do well ſo, *viz.*

I. That iniquity is the foundation of puniſhment, and II. That it is regular, uſual and ordinary for God to controul and puniſh ſinners. This is expected, and it becomes him, as he is the governor, and maintainer of righteouſneſs, and truth. And if you ſpeak properly of puniſhment, God doth only chaſtiſe *ſinners*, ſo, and no otherwiſe, *ſinners*, and none elſe. And then it is a great note, and will teach us to ſpeak more accurately when we ſpeak of *puniſhment*, for if we ſpeak properly God doth not puniſh but in the caſe of ſin. But becauſe uſe and practice hath amplified this word and in a more large ſenſe of the word, we ſay a man is puniſhed, when any evil thing befals him, though he hath done nothing that may procure it; I will therefore in a preparatory way offer *four caſes*, which we are not to call puniſhment.

1. The effects of God's *abſolute ſovereignty*, and power. We acknowledge, that God in the uſe of his ſovereignty, may deal differently with ſeveral of his creatures: and yet, where he deals better, he doth not reward, and where he deals worſe, he doth not puniſh. And if this were well underſtood, thoſe paſſages in *Rom.* ix. would be better underſtood: ſuch as theſe, *Jacob have I loved, and Eſau have I hated:*

hated: it imports no more than that it was the pleaſure of God, to take the younger brother *Jacob*, and make him the progenitor of the promiſed Meſſias, and not *Eſau*: and this is the meaning of that ſcripture. *Hating* there, is *leſs loving*; and our Saviour ſo uſeth the word, *Luke* xiv. 26. when he bids us *hate our own life, and hate father and mother*; whereas we are enjoined to honour father and mother; and to preſerve our lives; and it is our duty; for if we may not kill another we may not kill ourſelves; and this is expounded in *Matt.* x. 37, 38. by defending our life, that is, with denying Chriſt, *&c.* So again, *hath not the potter power over his clay, &c.* that is, he may make one, a veſſel of higher uſe; another of inferior uſe: and this belongs to God's undoubted priviledge, power and ſovereignty; to raiſe one to a higher condition in the world, and place another in an inferior condition; to make one high, another low; one rich, another poor; one a maſter, another a ſervant. Now we are not to ſay that God doth puniſh him that is in the worſt condition; here is no notion of puniſhment; this is neither the reward of any man's virtue, nor the puniſhment of any man's fault; for puniſhment properly is where there is *pœna ratione vindictæ*; but theſe things are as God pleaſeth. Now this I make further appear, by interpreting St. *Paul* by himſelf, where he ſpeaks of *veſſels of honour, and veſſels of diſhonour*, 2 Tim. ii. 20. His own words are, *In a great houſe, there are not only veſſels of gold and ſilver, but alſo ſome of wood and of earth, and ſome to honour, and ſome to diſhonour.* The *veſſel to honour*,

as

as the cup he drinks in; the veſſel to *diſhonour*, as other utenſils. Now, who hath any ill deſign upon his neceſſary utenſils? ſo that all theſe differences are within the latitude of God's ſovereignty, and ſpeak nothing, either of love or hatred.

2. That that is natural evil, ſometimes comes from God, barely for *trial*, and for *exerciſe*: and God doth not intend puniſhment at all, neither doth he look at any provocation, nor hath diſpleaſure at the perſon; and this was plainly good *Job*'s caſe. For in the beginning of the firſt chapter, *Job* hath God's recommendation to the full, and yet the devil hath *Job* in his power, and is only reſtrained as to his life. Therefore, *Job* was not *puniſhed*, but he was put upon the uſe and exerciſe, and trial of his patience, and ſeveral other virtues and graces; and therefore, *Job* did well to diſpute againſt his friends; for they run upon this notion, that if any man ſuffered evil, it muſt be puniſhment; and that *Job*, notwithſtanding his outward appearance, was either a hypocrite, or ſome way obnoxious: but he ſtands to it, and will maintain his uprightneſs. And in the xlii chap. there God juſtifies him, challenges his friends, and ſends them to *Job*, and he muſt ſacrifice for them. So that, notwithſtanding *Job* ſuffered ſo much evil, he was not an offender, nor puniſhed, but exerciſed: and God may tempt us in this kind, to try our affections to him, and whether we will ſtand to him, or no.

3. There are chaſtiſements, or harder conditions for the *increaſe* of virtue, the contempt of the world, the increaſe of modeſty and humility. We might over-

over-value the world, and value ourſelves too much, if we were not ſometimes taught, that theſe things are not to be taken into the account of our happineſs.

4. There is ſometimes alſo evils for an *evil neighbour's ſake :* a very good man, at whom God takes no offence, he may ſuffer ſome evil for his neighbour's ſake ; as good *Joſiah* was overborn by the evil that was done in the days of *Manaſſeh* ; and in this ſenſe, is to be underſtood that in *Ezek.* xxi. 3. *I will cut off from thee the righteous with the wicked.* And here is no puniſhment neither ; for they that are not in the fault, may ſuffer becauſe of the unhappineſs that comes upon their neighbours. And God knows how to make up this their loſs in time, and in eternity. In neither of theſe caſes, is God ſaid to puniſh. Neither of theſe caſes come within the caſe of the text.

But now, theſe caſes being taken out, I come to give you an account of the truth of the propoſition, *that ſin is the cauſe of puniſhment*, and that in *five* particulars.

1. Many ſins are the *natural cauſes* of the evils that are conſequent upon them : as intemperance of certain diſeaſes, diſtempers, and dying before mens time. Some men drink themſelves into fevers, and ſome into dropſies. Here ſin is the *natural cauſe* of evil. Men of intemperate and diſſolute lives deſtroy their bodily health ; dull and ſtupify their reaſon and underſtanding ; and waſte their eſtates. It is moſt apparent that ſome men have overthrown ſtrong and healthy conſtitutions ; and ſtupified quick

and nimble parts, by diſorderly living. They might have been much more in both, had they been ſober; had they not ſpoiled themſelves by miſ-government, *Eccleſ.* vii. 17. It is apparent that ſome men that never knew the getting of a penny, as they had not wit to get an eſtate, ſo they have not had the prudence to enjoy, ſo as to keep an eſtate; but have waſted it faſter than others got it. Now in theſe caſes no body can ſay that God was ſevere; but theſe men were mad, and played the fool. Let not us therefore aſcribe that to God, that is properly conſequent upon mens own exceſs, temerity and raſhneſs.

2. Some iniquities are the *moral cauſes* of evil; for this there are ſeveral inſtances. *Herod* taking God's glory to himſelf, was the moral cauſe of his dying of the louſy diſeaſe, *Acts* xii. 23. Becauſe he did arrogate and aſſume to himſelf *that* that was proper to God, God would not ſuffer him to go out of the world with the common honour of mankind. The *Iſraelites* calf-worſhip, (the firſt inſtance of idolatry we read of) or worſhipping God by a *falſe medium*, (which is idolatry, whatſoever the *Papiſts* ſay) was the true *moral cauſe* of the ſlaughter of ſo many of them. *Sennacherib* blaſphemes God, and the hoſt are all found dead corpſes that night, 2 *Kings* xix. 35. The caſe of *Corah*, *Dathan* and *Abiram*: God created a new thing in the world; the earth opens her mouth, and ſwallows them up alive, *Numb.* xiv. *Nebuchadnezzar* vaunting himſelf of his majeſty and his glory, preſently is made leſs than a man, ſinks into melancholy, and by his

own

own conceit, was diſpoſſeſſed of his kingdom, and eat graſs with the ox, *&c.* Dan. iv. 24. if that be the explanation. *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, lying to the Holy Ghoſt, are ſmitten dead, one after another, *Acts* v. whereas they did a brave act, ſold their eſtate, and brought a moiety, which if they had brought it as a moiety, had been well enough; but bringing half, as if that were all, they were ſlain (for lying to the Holy Ghoſt) by the word of St. *Peter*'s mouth. Here is ſin the *moral cauſe*, that is, the matter of the provocation, the procuring cauſe of puniſhment.

3. Some evils are the proper *remedies* of certain ſins; as ſcarceneſs, and famine, of *fulneſs of bread*, and exceſs: throwing ſome men out of place and power, the remedy to cure oppreſſion and wrong-doing. The ſtraitened condition of ſome men that are laviſh, prodigal and expenſive; the low eſtate of ſome that are proud and conceited; this keeps them within ſome meaſure and bounds. This is the 3d caſe; ſome evils the proper *remedies* of certain ſins.

4. Puniſhments are requiſite to maintain God's honour in the world. God would be forgotten to be the governor of the world: he would not be thought to be concerned, if he ſhould wholly neglect to puniſh, *Eccl.* viii. 11. *Becauſe ſentence againſt an evil work is not executed ſpeedily, therefore the hearts of the ſons of men are fully ſet in them to do evil. Therefore* are *open ſins* controuled, and *ſecret ſins* are puniſhed, leſt God ſhould be denied to be the *ſearcher of hearts*. God might be forgotten to be the ſu-

preme moderator and governor of the world, if the world ſhould not hear of him, when there be high exorbitancies.

5. The *variety of things*, and *changeable conditions* are as requiſite to maintain virtue and holineſs among mankind, as the winds, which occaſion ſtorms and tempeſts, which put the air and ſea into motion; and ſo keep them from ſtench and putrefaction. In nature, we do obſerve that all things are continued, and preſerved in their purity, by *motion*. And where there is not motion, there is putrefaction. Now ſince the *world rational* is as ſubject to corrupt as the *world natural* is, therefore it is fitting the world of mankind ſhould be put upon motion and activity; as it is requiſite for the *world natural* to be put upon motion, by the winds fanning the air, and putting the ſea into motion, and thereby preſerving them. This I obſerve, a great many ſcriptures impute creatures degeneracy to their living at eaſe, *Amos* vi. 1. *Jer.* xlviii. 11. *Zech.* i, 15. And *I am ſore diſpleaſed with the heathen that are at eaſe*, &c. So *Luke* xii. 19. and *I will ſay to my ſoul, ſoul, thou haſt much goods laid up for many years, take thy eaſe, eat, drink, and be merry*. Upon this account the leſſer evils, ſuch as are the evils of ſmart, are preventive of the greater evils; ſuch as are rancor, malignity, and naughtineſs of mind; and this tends to preſervation. And here is the account of God's puniſhment; not that he loves puniſhment; but as becoming a governor, and maintaining right, and for the good of his creatures.

And

And thus have I given you a juſt account of what is in theſe words *intimated* and *ſuppoſed*, that ſin is the procuring cauſe of puniſhment; and that God doth regularly and uſually controul and puniſh ſinners. A word of *inference*.

1. It is good ſervice to mankind to *reſtrain* evils and hinder them *James* iv. 1. This the magiſtrate may do; this the preacher of righteouſneſs, it is proper for him to do; *this*, the holy liver, by his good example, doth conſtantly do. The great evils that do infect and diſturb the world, they have their being and foundation in ſin: and therefore whoſoever prevents iniquity and ſin, he doth the work of a Saviour in the world, and a preſerver. The world would be another thing, were it not for the iniquity that prevails in it.

2. Then let us *not forſake our own mercy*, but favour ourſelves, not expoſe ourſelves to ruin, by cauſeleſs and unprofitable commiſſion of ſin. Here I would take up St. *Peter*'s counſel, and it's excellent good in this caſe. *Matt.* xvi. 22. *Be it far from thee*, &c. Do not yourſelves ſo great harm, for that that will not profit: do not do yourſelves miſchief upon ſo eaſy an account. Every thing of ſin is irrational and unprofitable, and a man offers violence to himſelf when he doth it, and doth himſelf wrong. Therefore, favour yourſelves, do not do yourſelves wrong, upon terms ſo unreaſonable, and ſo unprofitable.

3. Since iniquity doth ſo much prevail in the world, let *God* be *excuſed* from our charge of his uſurpation over his creation. Not he that brings on

the harm, but he that is the peccant party, doth the miſchief. As in war, not he that raiſeth the firſt army, but he that gives the firſt offence, is the cauſe of the war. Therefore let us not think that God doth uſurp, or gratify any thing in himſelf, when he doth puniſh: no, the true and proper cauſe is the delinquent party; he that gives the firſt offence.

4. When the judgments of God are upon us in purſuit of ſin, let us then do as *Joſhua* did, let us ſearch out the provoking cauſe, to uſe *Daniel*'s word, the *abomination of deſolation*, that is, the abominable thing that doth provoke God to deſolate. Let us remove that that is the cauſe, and doth contain the diſeaſe.

DISCOURSE VI.

The ſecret BLASTING of MEN.

PSALM xxxix. 11.

When thou with rebukes doſt correct man for iniquity, thou makeſt his beauty to conſume away like a moth; ſurely, every man is vanity. Selah.

I Have already ſpoken to what in theſe words is *intimated*, that *iniquity is the procuring cauſe of puniſhment*; and alſo to that that is here *ſuppoſed*, that *it is regular and ordinary, that God ſhould give teſtimony againſt iniquity*, that he ſhould challenge ſinners. Of theſe two I have given an account. In the III. Place

III. Place I come to, that that is *propoſed* in theſe words, that is, *that theſe rebukes of God do blaſt men, and cauſe them to wither. When thou with rebukes doſt correct man for iniquity, thou makeſt his beauty to conſume away like a moth.* This is the *main point* of the words, and that which I mainly thought upon, when theſe words came firſt into my mind. When God takes a ſinner in hand, and ſets himſelf to reverſe what the ſinner hath unduly done, he fails and comes to nothing; he cannot bear up againſt God. *Thou makeſt his beauty to conſume away like a moth.* I might enlarge theſe words to take in all the judgments of God upon a ſinful world, which are as ſo many teſtimonies of God againſt iniquity, ſuch as are the confuſions that are made by war; ſuch as are the deſolations that are made among men by famine, plague, and peſtilence, and all other judgments, wherein there is a common ſuffering, which all men acknowledge to be the hand of God; and in reſpect to theſe, *God is known by the judgments he doth execute.* But, not excluding theſe, I ſhall only take notice of the words, as to what may paſs *immediately between God and the ſinner in ſecret*, and are not ſo viſible to the eyes of the by-ſtanders, and that for theſe conſiderations. Conſidering the *Hebrew* words uſed in the text for *rebukes*, import ſuch rebukes, reproofs, as carry with them a notion, reaſon, and argument of conviction, and ſelf-condemnation.* They ſignifie *corripere, erudire*; to re-

* *Increpationes* hic reales intellige, h. e. poenas, quae ſunt vice increpationum, & quaſi advocati, ſeu inter-

preſſe,

prove, and teach by inſtitution, rules, law, and diſcipline: as *Gideon* is ſaid to have taught the men of *Succoth*, with briars and thorns; together with his remembring them of their ſcorn put upon him. That is, when thou doſt ſecretly call him to account and reprove him by reaſon, by arguments of conviction, and by ſelf-condemnation; *thou makeſt his beauty*, &c. Here is another word conſiderable; the effects and iſſue of theſe ſtrokes do terminate upon things that are *moſt valuable*, precious, *and deſirable*,† by which a man doth prefer himſelf and eſteem himſelf; ſuch as his health and ſtrength, his wealth, his friends, the uſe of his parts, his wit and his brain his reaſon and underſtanding, his internal joy, mental ſatisfaction, and ſelf-enjoyment: theſe come to nothing, when God rebukes; theſe *conſume and melt away*, as the *word* ſignifies. The iſſue expreſſed by the verb, is no ſudden, violent motion, but that which we call a *dying life*, or a *lingring death*, as the ſcripture otherwhere uſeth it; and as it is uſed *Joſhua* v. 1. when the kings of the *Amorites*, and the kings of the *Canaanites* heard that the waters of *Jordan* were dried up before the children of *Iſrael*, their hearts *melted away*: and *Pſal.* cvii. 26. their *ſoul melted away*, becauſe of trouble. So when God

pretes (ut Hebræi loquuntur,) inter Deum & hominem. V. ſynop. crit.

† Ejus deſiderium. Deſiderabile ejus. Quicquid in eo eſt deſiderabile. *Things of value and eſteem.* Dan. x. 3. Panis deſideriorum. *Pleaſant bread, things neareſt, and deareſt, moſt valuable, deſirable by the perſons ſuffering.*

comes

comes to call a great ſinner to an account, and to inquire of him; he is ſo far from giving any account or making any apology, that he *melts away*, ſinks under confuſion, and falls under the charge of the Almighty; ſo that I would read the words thus, *when thou with ſecret rebukes, doſt charge a perſon for his ſecret iniquities, thou makeſt his beauty, the things that he values himſelf by, to conſume away like a moth.*

God can immediately by his influence, fortify and encourage a man's mind; or elſe throw him down into diſcontent and frowardneſs. For the minds and ſpirits of men lie open to God, as much as ought of the creation; and there is the moſt inward relation between the creator and the creature; and wherein ſoever a man can keep out all created power (the world, the devil, yea the angels of glory) there he cannot keep out God: for God can call to adverteńcy; God can call off all other avocations, and then man muſt mind what God will have him conſider. When God will, the hearts of men will ſerve them, and be more than themſelves; and if God withdraws, they come to nothing. And indeed that that is truly and ſtrictly man's weal or woe, depends upon that, which paſſeth between God and a man's ſoul; the terms that are between God and a man's ſelf. How contented are ſome men in a condition that the world doth deſpiſe? and how much diſcontent in others, that live in worldly ſplendour? Therefore the difference muſt ariſe from the temper of mens minds, and the thoughts that men have of the terms that are between God and themſelves. 'Tis this notion that is in Gods anſwer

ſwer to *Moſes* praying for *his* ſiſter *Miriam*, Numb. xii. 14. *If her father had but ſpit in her face, ſhould ſhe not have been aſhamed ſeven days?* How much more, when the diſcountenancing is from the *Father of Spirits?* In ſpeaking to this point, I ſhall conſider two things.

Firſt, *Whereby* chiefly God doth thus blaſt men; *how* it is brought about, and whereby it comes to paſs.

Secondly, *In what* ſpecial *caſes*, we may fear judgments in this ſort: hearing from God in this worſt ſenſe.

For the *firſt*, I ſhall give an account in *ſix* particulars.

1. Theſe ſecret rebukes may lie in God's ſuffering the *foundation of nature to fail, and ſink*; ſo that men do not continue in the true uſe of reaſon and underſtanding: where men wholly ceaſe to be themſelves, as to the reaſon of their minds; or elſe what remains of mens reaſon, is not for themſelves, but is turned againſt them. As in the caſe of *Achitophel* and *Judas*, they were ſo diſpoſſeſſed of the true uſe of the reaſon of their minds, that they do ſuch acts againſt themſelves, as the animal principle keeps all creatures below us from; (for what creature was ever known to be acceſſory to its own deſtruction) and which *they* would never have done, had they continued in the true uſe of their underſtandings. This therefore is one way, that God can challenge the arbitrarineſs of his creatures; either by ſuffering the *foundation of nature to fail*, ſo that men may *not* have *the true uſe* of their reaſon and underſtanding;

underſtanding; or what they have left, they have *for their own diſadvantage*: as you often ſee perſons of wit and cunning have had no better uſe of their reaſon and underſtanding, than to reaſon againſt all counſels that are given them for their advantage. This is a dreadful way, and we have reaſon to thank God, that he doth uphold the foundation of our natures, and continues us in the uſe of true and ſolid reaſon.

2. This may be brought to paſs, by *diſaffecting the mind of man toward worldly contentment*, and ſatisfaction; ſo that the *ſubſidia vitæ*, the conveniencies and accommodations of life are not reliſhed, but prove ſapleſs, without ſavour or reliſh. The palate of the ſoul is out of taſte; ſo as to reliſh nothing, *Eccleſ.* i. 24. It is beſt freely to enjoy: but through this judgment of God, there is no more taſte than in the white of an egg, *Job* vi. 6. God can throw men out of the poſſeſſion of thoſe things as to ſelf-enjoyment in them, whereof they continue the legal owners, in *foro hominum*. For a man may poſſeſs ſeveral things which he may call his *own*; and yet he himſelf *enjoy* no contentment in them, no ſatisfaction from them. This *Solomon* hath obſerved in his ſurvey, in the book of *Eccleſiaſtes*: a man that hath right and titles, and no enjoyment, *Eccl.* vi. 2. And he reſolves, that it is beſt for a man to take his part of all things he calls his own in the world. And a man is twice his own in thoſe things he calls his own, if he have the power to uſe and enjoy them. And he tells us that *there is one alone, and there is not a ſecond, yea, he hath neither child nor brother*,

brother, &c. *Eccl.* iv. 8. and yet he pincheth himſelf, and ſtraitneth himſelf, and never asketh himſelf the queſtion for whoſe ſake he doth it, and he concludes that it is the bleſſing of God upon a man when he can afford himſelf the free uſe of all, that he calls his own: And it is the judgment of God upon baſe minds, that though they have, they have no enjoyment; they have no power to uſe that which they have; neither can gratify themſelves, nor do any good with it. They are ſlaves to their own eſtates; they *have* and they *have not*. This I reckon God's plague upon a man's mind, that he hath no true enjoyment of that which is his own.

3. This may be done by Gods inhibiting, or *ſuſpending* the *virtue of ſeveral creatures*, which otherwiſe would be very proper to give a man diverſion, or eaſe, or fitting ſupply. For, *nothing is any thing any longer than God will have it. That God that ſtopped the mouth of the lions* that they could not feed upon *Daniel*, Dan. vi. that God, that could forbid the fire from burning the three children, *Dan.* iii, that God can make every creature a comfort and inſtrumental for our good when he pleaſeth. The hungry *raven* at his bidding will be a meſſenger to bring wholſome food to a prophet, 1 *Kings* xvii. 6. As God can refreſh the earth by drops from heaven ſo he can make the *heaven over our head to be braſs, and the earth to be iron*, Deut. xxviii. 23. ſo that they ſhall not bring forth. Yea, he can make the rain that falls upon a mans ground, powder and duſt, *Deut.* xxviii. 24. He can, not only give rain, which all the idols of the nations cannot do, *Jer.* xiv. 22. ſo

Job

Job. v. 10. but alſo water the earth with the river of God, making it ſoft with ſhowers, *Pſ.* lxix. 9, 10. and give us fruitful ſeaſons, filling our hearts with food, and gladneſs, *Acts* xiv. 17. We are to underſtand that all things whatſoever, act in the power and virtue of the principle that God planted in them in the firſt moment of the creation. Now it is in God, that gave them ſeveral virtues, to inhibit and ſuſpend them. This is ſo great a truth, that I have teſtimony for it beyond all exception. It was acknowledged by a ſpirit, of which we can give no account; the ſpirit that was conjured up to give *Saul* an anſwer; ſaith this ſpirit (which is ſuppoſed to be an infernal ſpirit) *wherefore doſt thou ask of me, ſeeing the Lord is departed from thee, and become thine enemy?* if God inhibit, all creatures are at a loſs: if God forſake a man, he is undone to eternity, and this is acknowledged from hell, as all ſuppoſe; for *this* ſpirit ſaith it.

4. God may do this by *withdrawing his bleſſing* from mens endeavours; ſo that they become unproſperous, and the happy iſſues of providence are intercepted. This we have experience of, that many times things politickly contrived, and carried on with power, fail and miſcarry, and come to nothing, and this is becauſe God is not there. Other times you have things weakly managed, and unlikely inſtruments, and yet great ſucceſs, and things fall out above expectation: no account to be given of this, but Gods bleſſing and aſſiſtance. This is that which the wiſe man hath obſerved, that the *race is not always to the ſwift, nor the battle to the ſtrong*, &c.

but

but as himſelf obſerves, *Eccl.* ii. 26. *God gives to a man that is good in his ſight ; wiſdom, and knowledge, and joy : but to the ſinner he giveth travel to gather and to heap up* ; to gather by hard labour, and much pains taking ; but he hath no joy in it ; but he reſerves it *to give to the man that is upright in his ſight.* And this is another way, God's *withdrawing his bleſſings* from mens endeavours : and can any one be proſperous, when God's curſe is upon him ? It is the *bleſſing of God makes rich*, Prov. x. 22. If there be a croſs providence, a man may endeavour, and to little purpoſe.

5. God can do this by *awakening the guilt* of the ſinner upon his conſcience ; making that to ſting and gall him ; and then all the world is nothing. Many ſinners ſin themſelves into ſtupidity and ſenſeleſſneſs. Others relieve themſelves by running into company, and other avocations : but if God do but quicken the guilt of ſin upon mens conſciences they are thrown out of all poſſeſſion. Now to do this, there needs no more, but to call men to advertency ; no more but to hold men to thoughtfulneſs ; there needs no more from God, but to ſhut men up, and confine them, that they be not relieved by avocations and other employments. Where there is malignity, and guilt upon the *conſcience*, unremoved by repentance, there God needs no more than to hold a man to converſe with himſelf : and it is a marvel how this man ſtays in his wits. A great offender being at eaſe, hath no better ſettlement, and ſecurity than this, that he is in a hurry, and hath not yet leiſure to bethink himſelf.

6. This

6. This may be done when men through their *own fear, ſuſpicion and* jealouſy, have certain foretaſtes of Gods refuſal and diſpleaſure. We find by experience, that things are as we imagine. Now whether this be the truth of the caſe, or no, (deſertion of God) yet it is all one to me, if I think ſo. Thus God may give men up to their own melancholy conceits. There is no ſecurity to any mans peace or ſatisfaction in this life; or ſubſtantial ſelf-enjoyment, but two ways. 1ſt, That he hath always retained his innocence. The 2d is, that he is reſtored and recovered to his innocence, by his repentance, and Gods pardon, in, and through the blood of *Chriſt*. And if a man hath not one of theſe two, he is unſecure, and no man knows the condition he may be in, the next hour.

In theſe *ſix particulars*, I have given you an account of theſe *ſecret rebukes* of God, which the ſinner cannot bear up under; but when he feels them, if he be not upheld by the hand of God, and that he be brought into reconciliation with God, upon the terms of the covenant of grace, he will *melt away*, and come to nothing. This for the *firſt*. The *Second*, Is the caſe wherein there is *imminent danger* of ſuch judgments as theſe; and I will give you *ſix caſes*.

1. The caſe of *havocking conſcience*, by ſinning againſt the light of our own proper judgment; and in this caſe, a man doth himſelf inward hurt, he gives himſelf a wound at the heart: and the wounds of the mind are the torture of a man's ſoul; and *all the world will not ſecure that man, that is not in*

reconciliation with the reaſon of his own mind. To be ſenſible of *this*, that a man hath contradicted his own proper light; in this caſe a man doth an act of violence upon himſelf; a man cannot do himſelf greater wrong than by this *voluntary conſenting to known iniquity*. And this I account the true notion of ſin, *voluntarily to conſent to known iniquity*, and this is that which ſeparates between us and our God. If a man once voluntarily conſent to known ſin, he parts with the trueſt friend (next to God) that he hath in the world, his conſcience of right; that boſom friend, his only adviſer and counſellor, which will keep a man company when he hath no company elſe; that will give him content, and ſatisfaction in all conditions, that will give teſtimony to him, though he be ſlandred, calumniated, and though all the miſchiefs in the world fall upon him. This friend is never put away, but by that by which God is put away, *viz.* voluntary conſenting to known iniquity, and this puts God away, and puts away this home-friend, conſcience of right. If a man have no internal guilt, know no fault within himſelf, he will be able to bear up againſt all the world, and he will have ſatisfaction in every condition; but if he parts with *this*, he parts with his beſt friend, gives God offence, and cauſes him to withdraw, 2 *Cor.* i. 12. *Our rejoicing is this, the teſtimony of our conſcience, that in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, we have had our converſation in the world.* This is the firſt caſe of eminent *danger* of theſe judgments theſe *rebukes in ſecret*.

2. The

2. The ſecond caſe that I repreſent as dangerous, is the caſe of *hypocriſy*, diſſimulation and falſhood; and this is equal to the other. The falſe-hearted hypocrite is neither true to God nor man, but ſerves himſelf, and his own ends of God, of the world, of truth, of religion; and all theſe he ſubordinates to his own particular ends and purpoſes; only he pretends otherwiſe, and to cover a bad deſign, he doth uſe ſoft words. But how reſtleſs muſt this man be in his own thoughts, when he comes to conſider? For can he depend upon theſe, that theſe perſons or things will do him any good at all, when he knoweth he hath abuſed the perſons, and miſuſed the things? no certainly, this man cannot *think* that either God or man will be true to him, and ſo can have no confidence in either. For whoſoever is himſelf falſe, perfidious, and baſe, he doth not know whom he may truſt: for he doth not think there may be a better man than himſelf, and being ſenſible of his own internal baſeneſs, that *he* doth not mean what he ſaith to others; he verily believes all others to be as he is; and ſo finding himſelf unable to defend himſelf, he muſt be in fear of all the world. Therefore it is of neceſſity, that a hypocrite be in no true ſtate of ſatisfaction, or ſelf-enjoyment.

3. The caſe of *ſhameleſs apoſtacy*, repreſented *Heb.* x. 26, 27, 28. *For, if we ſin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more ſacrifice for ſins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, &c.* Where the ſin is a wilful departure; and the ſinner doth *deſpite to the ſpirit of grace,*

and he doth this knowingly, and conſidering what he doth; the danger is, there is no hope of recovery, becauſe he hath taken his choice, and contracted ſenſeleſſneſs of mind; that he is in a condition without hope. For thus will men think with themſelves; when theſe men come to conſider, they cannot but think that God ſhould do with them, as he finds cauſe to do, ſince they have done by God what they had a mind to do. Certainly, *they who do worſt by religion, ſhall fare the worſt by irreligion.* Ignorance and incapacity, on any terms whatſoever, hold no proportion in malignity, with this wicked averſation from God, and the ways of righteouſneſs. The apoſtle puts the caſe, 2 *Pet.* ii. 12. Do but conſider: what do men in ſuch a caſe as this? If one of great acquaintance and converſe prove an enemy and become perfidious; men had rather truſt a ſtranger than him; for it is the maxim of the world, (I confeſs it is not chriſtian) never truſt a reconciled friend.

4. When men *take up with the world,* and *leave God out,* give themſelves up to take delight and ſatisfaction in their worldly accommodations, and leave God out; *this,* though it be far ſhort in malignity, of the other three, yet *this* hath in it the full ſpirit of irreligion, and 'tis a high provocation of God; for it comes to this, God is little in their thoughts, *God is far from their reins.* For is it not very fit that we have a lively ſenſe of God, of the benefits we receive from him? Now for a man to ſit down in the world, and enjoy his affluence and abundance, and make no acknowledgment of God, this is downright

right irreligion: and this is, *to make him, that is all in all to us, and better than all; nothing at all to us, and lower than all*; and theſe men cannot but think if ever they come to a ſtrait, that this may be God's anſwer, what come you now to me for, in your neceſſity? as it is ſaid in *Judges* x. 14. *Go and cry unto the God which ye have choſen.* Relieve yourſelves by theſe things you take delight in; you thought not at all of me; you thought yourſelves ſufficiently provided for, and wherefore come you now to me? go to the idols you have choſen, let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation. So here I have repreſented to you four deſperate ſtates. But,

5. There is the caſe of priviledge and *exemption from outward puniſhment.* A man that is an evil doer, and a conſtant practiſer of ſin, hath cauſe to fear, if through his *power*, or the advantage of the times he is not in fear of any ones ſtroke; undoubtedly *that man* is more in danger in reſpect of God, and theſe internal ſtrokes of God diſpoſſeſſing him of what he hath. This you muſt know, that it ſometimes comes to paſs, that the all-gracious God will not, (notwithſtanding the high provocations of ſome irreligious perſons) he will not diſturb the outward peace, for ſuch reaſons as theſe; *ſometimes* for his infinite patience, and no man knows the length of God's patience; *ſometimes* he will forbear, for the ſake of thoſe that worſhip him. God hath ſpecial regard to the multitude of innocent, harmleſs creatures, ſuch as are *perſons of mean eſtates*, but harmleſs; and *children*, yea, for the *beaſts themſelves* as in the caſe of *Nineveh*, Jonah iv. 11. Now in ſuch

caſes as theſe, that God will extend his patience beyond what in reaſon we can imagine; and that he will ſpecially gratify the number of his worſhipers, and that he will ſuſpend judgments in reſpect of harmleſs people, and children; then in this caſe great ſinners have cauſe to fear God's dealing with them *in private*. For God hath ways to deal with men in private, by letting them ſink down into darkneſs of mind, *&c.* And therefore if any man knows he is deeply obnoxious to God, and yet proſpers in the world, he hath great cauſe to fear that he ſhall hear from God, by *ſecret rebukes*, whereby he ſhall *melt away and come to nothing*. The

6th, And laſt caſe is, the caſe of *high ſpiritual advantages*, where there is powerful, and effectual means; but through a contracted hardneſs, they prove altogether inoperative, and without effect; and *this* was the condemnation of *Capernaum*, *Corazin* and *Bethſaida*, Luke x. 13, 15. But of this I ſhall give you a further account, the next opportunity.

And thus have I repreſented to you, as the *ways* whereby theſe *ſecret rebukes* of God are brought about; ſo alſo the eminent caſes of *danger*.

DIS-

DISCOURSE VII.

The ſecret BLASTING of MEN.

PSALM XXXIX. 11.

When thou with rebukes doſt correct man for iniquity, thou makeſt his beauty to conſume away like a moth; ſurely, every man is vanity. Selah.

WHEN I took this ſcripture in hand, I thought I had but little to offer to your conſideration, and thought, at once, to have diſpatched all: but well weighing and conſidering the conſequence and import of the matter of theſe words, (than which, nothing more in all the world, tends to the laying a ſolid foundation of conſcience, and engaging of men in reſpect of the ſecret ſenſe of their minds, to ſtand aright in the ſight of God) I therefore cannot take my hands off; and though I have offered many things, yet ſome few more remain.

I have given you an account why I have explicated theſe words of thoſe things that paſs *immediately between God, and the ſpirit of man*, whereof byſtanders know but little. They may diſcern the effects, ſee men wither, and come to nothing; but the cauſe (which is in ſecret between God and them) they feel not, they know not. The laſt day, I gave you an account how the *Hebrew* words in

the text led me to this notion of thoſe impreſſions that God makes upon the minds of men by way of reaſon and argument, when he comes to challenge, convince and reprove them; the reaſon of their own mind fails them, they cannot juſtify themſelves, or bear up againſt God. And therefore I read the words, *when thou with ſecret rebukes, doſt charge a perſon for his ſecret iniquities, thou makeſt his beauty*, viz. *his reaſon and underſtanding; his wit and parts, thoſe things that he values himſelf by, to conſume away like a moth*, &c.

I have ſhewed in *ſix* inſtances, whereby this comes to paſs.

I have alſo ſhewed you in part the great provocation of God to deal thus with men; to confound them in their inward parts, to beat them out of the ſenſe of their own reaſon; and leave them ſelf-condemned, ſo that they retain no priviledge of ſelf-enjoyment. And I have inſtanced in *ſix caſes*, which do properly lead men into this condition.

1. The caſe of *havocking conſcience*, by ſinning againſt the ſenſe of their own judgment.

2. The caſe of *hypocriſy*, diſſimulation, and falſehood: when men do not honeſtly mean, or really intend.

3. The caſe of ſhameleſs *apoſtacy*.

4. (Which is yet inferior to the other three, but yet bad enough) The caſe of *irreligion*, when men give God no place, are taken up with their own outward accommodations, and have no ſenſe of God; when he is not, by thoſe good things, endeared or recommended to them; this is downright irreligion.

5. The

5. The caſe of *exemption from outward puniſhment*: as whenſoever it pleaſeth God (as ſometimes it doth) to make uſe of his infinite patience: for who amongſt us knows the length of Gods patience? and upon that conſideration, he will forbear the world, notwithſtanding profaneneſs and declared atheiſm.

Or whenſoever God is pleaſed out of reſpect to his *worſhippers*, or out of his compaſſion towards innocent infants, and harmleſs creatures, to keep off judgments; then is it to be thought that thoſe perſons that are wilful ſinners, *&c.* ſhall hear from God *in private*; to abate their confidence, and to ſhew how exorbitant they are, in their ways. This God can do, by letting them ſink down into mental diſtraction, *&c.* For God can diſpoſſeſs a man of all his comforts, by not giving him power of ſelf-enjoyment, and taking content. For *this* of the two, is a far greater mercy of God, for a man to have leſs, and a contented mind; than to have much more, and not have ſatisfaction. For power of ſelf-enjoyment is a far greater thing than right and title.

It comes to paſs ſometimes, that great offenders do avoid the hands of men, either through the undue favour of partial judges, or ſometimes by great friends, or ſome worldly intereſt, or craft, or cunning; or ſometimes a thing is acted in ſecret, and cannot be legally proved (as what more ordinary than ſecret murders?) when it cannot at all be proved at a diſtance of time, the guilty cannot be at peace, and their own mouths muſt betray them. In theſe caſes, it is moſt likely, theſe perſons will hear from God.

6. In

6. In the laſt place the caſe of *high ſpiritual advantages.* That was the aggravation of the ſin of *Capernaum, Coraizin* and *Bethſaida*, that they were *lifted up to heaven*; and they are threatned, to be *thrown down into hell*, Luke x. 13, 15. *For if the mighty works that were done in them, had been done in Sodom and Gomorrah, they had repented*, Matt. xi. 21, 23. and this is the aggravation. And this is an obſervation, you never read of a ſin that cannot be pardoned, till you read of the extraordinary gift of the Holy Ghoſt. The caſe that is repreſented, *Iſaiah* vi. 9, 10. all deſperate caſes refer to. And he ſaid, *Go tell this people, hear ye indeed, but underſtand not; and ſee ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and ſhut their eyes: leſt they ſee with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and underſtand with their heart, and convert, and be healed*, Mat. xiii. 14. Mark iv. 12. Luke viii. 10. John xii. 40. All deſperate conditions refer to this; every one of the four evangeliſts relate that our Saviour refers caſes to it; it is referred to, in the acts of the apoſtles, *Acts* xxviii. 26. and by St. *Paul* to the *Romans* xi. 8. Here it is in the firſt copy, and all after inſtances are after this example. When men dally in religion, diſſemble with God, give God high offences, provoke and exaſperate him to diſpleaſure, by their trifling and dallying, and hypocriſy, and diſſimulation, and irreligion, and living in ſin; then it comes to the caſe which is repreſented in the prophet *Iſaiah*. This notion is declared, *Amos* iii. 2. *You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will puniſh*

you

you for all your iniquities. And this beſt complies with the reaſon of the thing, and holds the fitteſt proportion; that they who have had the greateſt opportunities and have been moſt wanting to themſelves, and continue in their iniquities, and give themſelves leave to ſin, which are the worſt of ſinners; that judgments ſhould befal *them.* And it is reaſonable, that God ſhould recompence ſpiritual ſins by *ſpiritual judgments*, and theſe are a reprobate ſtate, a ſeared conſcience, a blinded underſtanding; and this is the worſt condition: for this man is remoteſt from repentance, and repentance is the recovery. Or elſe that they be under the dreadful and fearful apprehenſions of an illuminated and miſgiving mind; and ſo upon a continual rack and torture. Now theſe *mental judgments* they have a peculiarity to the viſible church: and are much more within the compaſs of the viſible church than in the wilderneſs of the world. Thus I have repreſented to you the *caſes*: now I come to make ſome application, I will make theſe inferences.

1. Hence we have an account of men's withering in the world, taking little or no delight in their affairs; though in no bad circumſtances, do not enjoy themſelves. We wonder ſometimes that men cannot be content; they want nothing, neither friends, nor eſtates, nor any other convenience of life; men in ſhorter conditions by far, enjoy themſelves upon much better terms; here is the account, there are ſecret judgments of God; judgments that work in darkneſs. There is no wonder that men cannot hold up their heads when they are neither

at

at peace with God, nor at peace with their own conſciences: and all theſe things that are without a man will make no more recompence for the want of the peace of conſcience, than it will make a recompence for the pain of the gout, to lie upon a bed of down. Men have *no peace* neither *with God*, becauſe not reconciled to the nature, mind, nor will of God; nor have they *peace in their own conſciences*, becauſe under guilt. Therefore no wonder that friends and revenues *&c.* will not relieve them; they have an internal wound. In this repect I may truly ſay that mens *ſin go before them into judgment*, 1 *Tim.* v. 24.

I will give you ſome inſtances.

It was from ſomething in ſecret between *Cain* and his conſcience, that his countenance fell, *Gen.* iv. 5. for he had ſacrificed as well as his brother *Abel*: but it was ſomething within him. Another inſtance,

In *Nabal*, his heart died within him upon his wife's words only, *Sam.* xxv. 37. which is ſtrange, for a covetous miſerable wretch will moſt commonly endure words hard enough: for words break no bones, but the text tells us *God ſtruck him*, verſe 38.

Another inſtance; God defeats the counſel of *Achitophel*, 2 Sam. xvii. 14, 23. and he cannot bear it, but goes and makes away with himſelf.

Again; *Judas* he had his bargain; he had received the price of innocent blood, *Matt.* xxvii. 3, 4, 5. why could not he enjoy it? he might have enjoyed it for any demand of thoſe that paid it him, for they would not meddle with it again. Had *Judas* been in the ſame temper of mind he was in before

fore he did that ill act, he might have enjoyed himſelf as happily as ſo much money would have made him; but it was too hot for his fingers. We are not ſure of taking any comfort, if we leave God out.

Another inſtance; *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, Acts v. 9. They might have come off for noble benefactors, and received the thanks of the church, had they not diſſembled with him who ſearcheth the hearts, and had he not found them guilty of *lying to the Holy Ghoſt. It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*, Heb. x. 31. of him that can not only kill the body, but the ſoul, *Matt.* x. 28. And how doth God *kill the ſoul*, which is immortal, but by diſcountenancing it, and letting it fall down into darkneſs?

Here are inſtances of *bad* men: but I will inſtance in better kind of men, that make ſad complaint, when there is any thing in this kind.

The firſt is of *Job*, Job iii. 20. *Wherefore is there life to the man that is bitter in ſoul?* and *Job* xiii. 26. *Thou writeſt bitter things againſt me.* Here is a repreſentation from a *good* man, of the ſadneſs of this condition.

Next, the caſe of *David*, Pſal. li. 9. *Make me to hear of joy and gladneſs, that the bones which thou haſt broken, may rejoice.* 11. *Caſt me not away from thy preſence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me.* 12. *Reſtore unto me the joy of thy ſalvation; uphold me with thy free Spirit.* When *David* felt this caſe, ſee how he expreſſeth it.

Another

Another good man, *Pſal.* lxxvii. 2. *In the day of my trouble I ſought the Lord; my ſore ran in the night, and ceaſed not; my ſoul refuſed to be comforted.* 3. *I remembred God, and was troubled; I complained, and my ſpirit was overwhelmed. Selah.* 7. *Will the Lord caſt off for ever, and will he be favourable no more?* 8. *Is his mercy clean gone for ever, doth his promiſe fail for evermore?* 9. *Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger ſhut up his tender mercy? Selah.* See the ſadneſs of men in this forlorn and loſt ſtate and condition, when God comes to apply himſelf ſecretly to mens ſpirit, and doth inwardly reprove. The like you have in *Pſal.* xc. 11. *Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, ſo is thy wrath.* You know, *fear* antedates evil, and multiplies evil; men commonly fear more than there is. The like caſe you have in *Iſaiah*, lvii. 16. *I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth, for the ſpirit ſhould fail before me, and the ſouls which I have made.* This ſcripture holds forth this notion fully to you, that I have been ſo long upon v. 17. *For the iniquity of his covetouſneſs was I wroth, and ſmote him; I hid me, and was wroth; and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart*, v. 18. *I have ſeen his ways and will heal him; I will lead him alſo, and reſtore comforts unto him, and to his mourners.* 19. *I create the fruit of the lips, peace, peace to him that is near, ſaith the Lord, and I will heal him.* 20. *But the wicked are like the troubled ſea, when it cannot reſt, whoſe waters caſt up mire and dirt.* 21. *There is no peace, ſaith my God, to the wicked.* So *Deut.* xxxii. 39. *See now that I, even*

ven I am he, and there is no God with me; I kill, and I make alive, I wound and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand. God killeth, and God makes alive, 1 Sam. ii. 6. by theſe internal rebukes, by theſe impreſſions that God makes upon the mind in caſe of offence; in caſe of conſenting to iniquity. Theſe are called God's killing a man's ſoul: for no man can bear up againſt God; neither can he live under the reproofs of God. This is a true account, that man cannot be happy in the world though he may call never ſo much of the world his own; tho' he hath eſtate, friends, power, authority, *&c.* unleſs God be with him in ſome meaſure, he is not ſure to have content; ſo true is this, that *when God with rebukes*, &c.

But to prevent *miſtakes*, I here ſuggeſt two things to you, which being taken into conſideration I cannot be miſunderſtood in any thing that I have ſaid.

1. This notion doth concern the *two oppoſite ſtates*; reconciliation with God, and the contrary: if men trifle in religion, or if they continue profane and irreligious. None can be himſelf longer than God is with him; or at leaſt will ſuffer him.

2. Which I muſt take in (for I muſt diſcourage no body) you muſt give great allowance for the mind's miſapprehenſion through *miſtaken notions*, and to perſons that are under the power of *melancholy*. He that is *melancholic*, believes nothing from any body; he ſaith nothing right to any body, and he is too ſevere in his meaſure of himſelf: and then there are ſome good people, who are under falſe apprehenſions, and under the power of *miſtaken notions*

tions; and till they be rid of theſe, their peace is not well ſecured.

This is the *firſt inference*. The *ſecond* thing that I *infer* upon the former diſcourſe, is this; if men would be true to themſelves, and not depart from their own mercy; if men would, in a true ſenſe, favour themſelves, not do themſelves that miſchief that the devil and the world cannot do; let them then keep within compaſs, let them not betray themſelves; let them *not give voluntary conſent to known evil*; let them not become obnoxious to God, but let men have God greatly in regard, and above all things, keep in good terms with him, and endeavour by all means, to approve themſelves to him. Undoubtedly a man is altogether inſecure, unleſs there be terms of right underſtanding between God and him. If a man have not a conſcience free from guilt, he is in danger, obnoxious to God, and is not ſecure againſt the malignity of the world. This for certain, the ſecurity and ſolidity of our peace, is ſettled upon the reality of the terms that are betweeen God and us. But, if men are obnoxious to God, by having knowingly conſented to iniquity; for that is the *characteriſtical* form of the degenerate ſtate, that they do *voluntarily conſent to known iniquity*: if men become obnoxious to God, by giving their voluntary conſents to that which their judgments tell them is evil; if men contract guilt to their conſciences, and repent not, and ask pardon, in and through the blood of Chriſt; then they are in fear and danger every moment: for at God's ſentence, our ſouls live, or die: by his judg-

ment,

ment, they are abſolved or condemned. Wherefore it is fundamental to our intereſt, that God be obſerved. It is a very lamentable caſe, that many men have religion to very ſorry ends and purpoſes; not for this great end of ſettling ſolid ſobriety, not for the laying a foundation of right and equity, not for the determination of good and evil, not for rectifying of conſcience, not for directing them in all caſes and particulars of life; but it is taken up for a profeſſion in credit; and it hath no regenerating power on men, inwardly to ſanctify them, and make them Godlike: in which caſe, *as they have not the effect of it, ſo they have not the comfort of it*; for they are never ſafe, never ſecure. Whereas, where religion is in ſincerity, perſons are provided for, as to all caſes, and for all times: and theſe perſons never think of God but with great complacency and delight; and have great expectations from him, and they converſe with great ſatisfaction. Our weal and wo depends upon our intereſt with God. This is the *ſecond* thing I infer from the words.

Thirdly, Upon this conſideration how liable we are to God's demand and challenge, through failings and miſcarriages in our lives, what cauſe have we to think ourſelves beholden to God, that we have *encouragement to go to him*, and that we find in ourſelves any *diſpoſition God-ward*; any confidence in him. For we have reaſon to think that God may have taken offence, and juſtly refuſe us, and remember againſt us our former offences, when we make application to him: for as guilty perſons are in danger, ſo are they alſo full of jealouſies, and

ſuſpicions

ſuſpicions and fears, &c. *The wicked flee when none purſue but the righteous is as bold as a lion Prov.* xxviii. 1. So that it is the wonderful grace of God to fortify and encourage our minds to come to him; and to caſt ourſelves upon his mercy; whereas we know we have given him offence. We find it ſo in our fellow creatures; where we have given offence, we have no confidence. We are therefore as much beholden to God for this, as for any thing elſe in the world? let us therefore think of ourſelves modeſtly, how ſhort, and unworthy we are; and think of God ingenuouſly, and be thankful to him for his goodneſs. What cauſe have we given to God to diſpoſſeſs us of ourſelves, and to diſaffect our minds towards worldly contentment, or to ſuſpend the virtue of the creatures to us, or to withdraw his bleſſing from our endeavours, or to awaken the guilt of ſin upon our conſciences, or to let fall ſome drops of his own wrath upon us; and yet notwithſtanding all our faultineſs, through his great compaſſion, none of theſe evils have befallen us: but we continue in life, and health, and ſtrength, and power of ſelf-enjoyment, &c. and (which is more than all the reſt, and ſettles all the reſt) confidence in God, and boldneſs to make application to him.

Laſtly, What value then ſhould we put upon the *grace of the goſpel*, which hath declared to us a new and living way to approach to God. That for us, who have fruſtrated the firſt contrivances of wiſdom, and loſt the confidence of creatures, there is a *new and living way* through the grace of the goſpel, to approach to God; in which we may come

come to God with aſſurance and confidence. It is a mighty place of ſcripture, *Heb.* x. 22. Let us *draw near with a true heart, in aſſurance of faith*, &c. The grace of the goſpel doth contain in it, as well the diſpoſition qualifying the ſubject, as warranty for the authoriſing of the perſon. So that there is remedy againſt all manner of exception; either the incapacity of the perſon, becauſe he is guilty; or the indiſpoſition of the party, becauſe of malignity: ſo ſovereign is the uſe of repentance and faith in the Lord Jeſus.

Thus have I finiſhed this great point: and that which hath made me ſo long upon this argument, is, becauſe I have not found a more ſolid foundation to ſettle and eſtabliſh conſcience toward God upon, than this is: ſince ſinners become obnoxious to God; and no power, no priviledge, no wit nor cunning, no friendſhip, no worldly intereſt, nor advantage can give defence againſt the ſtrokes of God, to whoſe eyes all that is done, lies open. Therefore it is apparent, no man's eſtate hath ſettlement, unleſs a man be in reconciliation with the rule of righteouſneſs. If men be inwardly guilty, though no man be privy, yet they are unſafe and inſecure. If men be obnoxious to God, if he once come to reprove, the foundation of their confidence will ſink, and all that they think to ſhelter themſelves by, will fail and diſappear, and come to nothing. Therefore it is very neceſſary for men, to fear God, and have him in due regard and be in reconciliation with him.

IV. The next obſervation is, that which is *inferred*: *ſurely every man is vanity*; of which I will ſpeak but a little, and ſo conclude.

Upon the conſideration of the whole, the *pſalmiſt* doth *infer*, *Surely every man is vanity.*

1. Vanity, as being ſo ſubject to be *miſtaken*; ſo liable to miſcarry.

2. Vanity, as being ſo *unable* to bear himſelf up againſt God, againſt whom he doth offend; when God comes to require an account, and to reprove and challenge.

But a little further, to give you an account, though theſe two were enough. Vanity may be charged upon men in a *threefold way.*

1. In a *negative* ſenſe.

2. In a *comparative* ſenſe; and

3. In a *privative* ſenſe.

1. In a negative ſenſe, man is vain: every creature is ſo, becauſe he is *ſhort of divine perfection.* For a creature is primary to nothing, he hath no abſolute being; for he comes into being at God's call, continues in being by his maintenance and allowance, and muſt leave this being at his appointment. He is ſubject to God's pleaſure, ſo is vain in a negative ſenſe; in no moment of his life is he independent, neither for exiſtence, nor in execution: for *in God, we live, and move, and have our being*, Acts xvii. 28.

2. Vain, in a *comparative* ſenſe, becauſe he is *ſhort of the perfection of other beings*; ſhort of the divine perfection, nothing in compariſon, *Iſaiah* xl. 15, 16, 17. *Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket,*

bucket, and are accounted as the ſmall duſt of the balance, behold he taketh up the iſles as a very little thing; and Lebanon is not ſufficient to burn, nor the beaſts thereof ſufficient for a burnt-offering. All nations before him are as nothing, and they are counted to him leſs than nothing and vanity. And then ſhort in perfection of ſome of his fellow-creatures, ſhort of angelical perfection. *Thou madeſt him a little lower than the angels*, Pſal. viii. 5. *Yet it is ſaid, God chargeth the angels with folly*, Job iv. 18. Not imputing any moral defect to the angels, but an incompetition to the divine perfections; and man *made lower than the angels*. Now ſhortneſs in theſe two conſiderations is no body's diſparagement; for this is to be a creature, and herein any man is as good as God would have him. But I wiſh I could excuſe mankind from vanity in the

3d ſenſe: that is our fault and our ſhame, for man is vain in a *privative* ſenſe. This is that that doth ſink and deface, and deform the glorious workmanſhip of God in the moment of his creation: and this lies in ſix things.

1. A man is *diveſted of his innocence*. He is out of the image of God, his high perfection, which he was inveſted with in the moment of his creation: he has loſt his proper perfection, hath loſt more than the whole creation can repair.

2. By his iniquity, he hath *contracted impotency*. By giving God offence, and departing from God, we have loſt our innocence; and brought upon ourſelves dread and terror, and horror of conſcience: for this always accompanies guilt. And then

3. By *unnatural uſe, our faculties are marred and ſpoiled*; the ingenuity and *modeſty* of a man's mind, and the nobleneſs of his underſtanding, is marred and ſpoiled moſt grievouſly. In this a ſinner miſerably wrongs himſelf by ſin. For if a man do but one act that is unnatural and horrid, he abuſes the ingenuity, candour and nobleneſs of his mind for ever. If a man once let go the fairneſs of his nature, no man knows where he will ſtop. He is fit to do every deſperate act of ſin. So that man is vain, becauſe he hath loſt his innocence, and deformed himſelf by his ſin; he hath *marred his principles*, and made himſelf unfit for many good acts that he might have done.

4. A man is vain, by his lying apprehenſions. *Man walketh in a vain ſhew*, Pſal. xxxix. 6. A man is his own fool, flatters himſelf into a fool's paradiſe, cheats, deluſions, lies rule in mens lives. Man gives his conſent to impoſtures. Man will believe, becauſe he would have it. Man feeds upon lies, fancies, imaginations. Mens hopes and fears, confidences and refuges are laid, as lying apprehenſions and conceits miſguide, *If.* xxviii. 15.

5. By his fooliſh undertakings. Man goeth raſhly forth into act, neither well reſolving concerning the enemies of his action, nor duly conſidering his ſufficiency to grapple with, and overcome difficulties, *Luke* xiv. 31.

The vanity of man in iſſuing forth to act, conſiſts in this. (1.) That man is *ſiniſter* in his *intention*: aims not right, miſtakes the world for God. (2.) That man is *irregular*, and inordinate in *motion*;

tion, errs in choice and application of *means* to his end. (3.) That man is *fruſtrated*, and diſappointed in the iſſue: after all coſts, curſeth his labour. After promiſing expectations, expenſive ways in the cloſe of all, has a ſhadow for the ſubſtance. Hope deferred makes his heart ſick, and the deſire is not accompliſhed, which is a tree of life.

6. By his inward *perturbations*, man is vain. The affections of the ſoul, have as well changed their *name* as their *uſe*. A man is always at difference, in conteſtation with himſelf. *'Tis not in man, a monarchy of reaſon, but a democracy of humours.* Man diſturbs his own content and quiet. To enjoy a man's ſelf, is the greateſt good in the world: the ſerenity and ſweet compoſure of his mind, is happineſs within; yet men eaſily diſcompoſe themſelves, and throw themſelves into mal-content. Were all the world elſe in a calm, yet man will not be at quiet; he raiſeth ſtorms and tempeſts, makes foul weather within. We have not ourſelves in our own hands: we are not maſters of our paſſions, ends, and undertakings.

Man *fears* where no fear is, and ſo creates himſelf an enemy, by his own fancy: he dotingly *loves* what will return nothing for affection: he runs out in hope, where there is no ground for expectation.

The *uſes* to be made of this, are theſe.

1. There is no cauſe of *pride*. Preſumption, pride and conceit, are the moſt ungrounded things in the world. Self-denial is the moſt rational act. Why ſhould we believe a lie? Why do we make tools of ourſelves, by fond ſelf-flattery? man is *vain*

in his exiſtence : by *opinion* a liar, *Pſal.* lxii. 9. *Things* are not to conform to our apprehenſions ; but our thoughts are to anſwer things. 'Tis our miſery to be deprived, but 'tis our madneſs to be deceived, befooled ; otherwiſe we affect to know things juſtly as they are ; why are we not willing to know ourſelves ?

2. What cauſe have we to magnify the rich grace of God, who gave ſo great a price for us, ſo little worth. The great phyſician hath dearly bought diſeaſed patients. God hath bought chaff inſtead of wheat ; *vanity* inſtead of ſubſtance. It could not be therefore his gain by us, that did direct his choice, but his compaſſion of our miſery, that procured us mercy.

What the grace of God finds us, and how grace leaves us, are two things of greateſt conſideration. From the depth of miſery, to the height of excellency. Who deals with the blind, halt and diſeaſed, but God ? *Luke* xiv. 21. We may ſay as *Job*, *Doſt thou open thine eyes upon ſuch an one ?* Job xiv. 3.

3. Let no man believe himſelf, or *lean to his own underſtanding*, Prov. iii. 5. *He that truſteth in his own heart, is a fool*, Prov. xxviii. 26. Let the grace of God be acknowledged, both for wiſdom, and for ſtrength. Nothing is better grounded than that advice of wiſdom ; *In all thy ways acknowledge him*, Prov. iii. 6. If *Egypt* be a *broken reed*, Iſa. xxxvi. 6. which was never ſtrong, becauſe a *reed* ; which will pierce him that leans on it, becauſe *broken* : is not he raſh and unadviſed, that truſts, and hath confi-

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dence in ſuch things? *better have no confidence, than ſelf-confidence: which is a refuge of lies; an hiding place that waters will overflow*, Iſa. xxviii. 17. And man is never ſo broken, as when he is fruſtrated in his expectation.

4. Hence we have an account of the general madneſs that rules in the commonwealth of men. What can the tranſaction be, when the convention is made up of vain and empty perſons? the world is a very chaos, and confuſion; ſo that, if things be *tolerable* in the world, that is much more than we can groundedly expect from men.

Whatever is of any conſideration in the world is to be accounted to God, who made a *chaos* and confuſion the ground-work of a glorious creation.

DISCOURSE VIII.

Preached before the Honourable HOUSE of COMMONS, *February* 4. 1673.

JER. vi. 8.

Be thou inſtructed, O Jeruſalem, leſt my ſoul depart from thee; leſt I make thee deſolate, a land not inhabited.

TO awaken your apprehenſions upon this occaſion, I ſhall make uſe of the words of king *Hezekiah*, when he rent his clothes, and covered himſelf with ſackcloth, and went into the houſe of the Lord, upon an occaſion of *Senna-*

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cherib's invading *Judah*, and ſending reviling *Rabſhakeh* to inſult, and triumph over them: his words were, *This is a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and of provocation*, Iſa. xxxvii. 3. For our further advantage upon this account, I will adjoin the words of the prophet, *Joel* ii. 2. *A day of darkneſs and of gloomineſs, a day of clouds and of thick darkneſs*: v. 3. *A fire devours before them, and behind them a flame burneth.* By fears and apprehenſions people are appaled, and *all faces gather blackneſs*, v. 6. This ſeems much to ſuit with our condition; and if ſo, it becomes us (as *Ezra* ſometimes did, *Ezra* ix. 13.) to make a due acknowledgment to God, and to ſtate things right: *for all this is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great treſpaſſes; for God hath puniſhed us leſs than our iniquities deſerve*, *viz.* in the late devouring fire, and a little before, in the raging peſtilence, and by ſeveral other judgments. But now God hath given us a very great deliverance, and we have out-lived all theſe judgments, and we have cauſe to ſay that God is righteous, not in the ſenſe that ſometimes the word is taken, *viz.* to puniſh condignly; but righteous in the ſenſe of the prophet, *Dan.* ix. 7, 8. *O Lord, righteouſneſs belongeth unto thee*; which he explains v. 9. *To thee, O Lord, belongs mercies and forgiveneſs, though we have rebelled againſt thee.* God hath been gracious, and God is righteous; he hath been gracious and merciful; for we are before God, all of us in our tranſgreſſions, and we cannot ſtand before God becauſe of them: wherefore let us be ingenuous, and let us reaſon God's cauſe with ourſelves, as *Ezra* once did with

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the people of *Iſrael, ſhould we again break thy commandments, and join in affinity with a people of ſuch abominations; wouldeſt not thou be angry with us till thou hadſt conſumed us, ſo that there ſhould be no remnant nor eſcaping*, Ezra ix. 14.

We profeſs, by our aſſembly this day, to do what king *Hezekiah* did; to make hearty application to God, to humble ourſelves before him, to deprecate his offence and diſpleaſure, and to repreſent before him, the ſad and deplorable condition of the nation, and to do alſo what the prophet *Joel* called the people to: *Thus ſaith the Lord, turn ye even to me, with all your heart, with faſting, with weeping, and with mourning, and rent your hearts, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God.* And alſo what we find the prophet *Jeremiah* iv. 4. in the like caſe directing to; *Circumciſe yourſelves to the Lord, and take away the fore-skins of your heart, leſt my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it, becauſe of the evil of your doings.* Let us cloſe with that of *Daniel* iv. 27. *Break off your ſins by righteouſneſs, and your iniquities by acts of mercy, if there may be a lengthning of your tranquillity.* For a day of humiliation, is a day of repentance, in order to reconciliation with God; and the truth of repentance lies in real reformation, in leaving off ſin; in converſion and turning to the Lord. *It is not to bow down the head as a bulruſh, and to ſpread ſackcloth and aſhes under us*, Iſa lviii. 5. But as the *Ninevites* did, who though a people that were not under any inſtitution of God, before the prophet *Jonah*'s denunciation againſt them (that we know of;) yet they teach us

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the true nature of a faſt; for they ſay, *Cry mightily unto God, and let every one turn from the evil of his ways, and from the violence that is in his hands*, Jonah iii. 8. So the prophets upon all occaſions do inſiſt, and lay ſtreſs upon the indiſpenſible neceſſity of morals; by which I underſtand things that are good in themſelves, good in their own nature, and quality; that are not only recommended to us by inſtitution, *Iſa.* i. 16. *Waſh ye, make ye clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, ceaſe to do evil, learn to do well.* This is the prophets direction. And he ſpeaks undervaluingly of ſacrifices of all ſorts, tho' the foundation of them was divine inſtitution. And as the prophet begins, ſo he ends, *Iſa.* lxvi. 3, 4. *They have choſen their own ways, and their ſoul delighteth in their abominations.* Wherefore, what do ſacrifices in this caſe ſignify? No more than *ſlaying a man, or cutting off a dog's neck, or offering of ſwines blood: he that burneth incenſe, is as if he bleſſed an idol.* Theſe things were once commanded by God, and were acceptable to him, if men were not wanting in moral duties: for there is no diſpenſation for immorality, there is no diſſembling with God; he will not take ſacrifice at our hands, if we be not refined in our ſpirits, and reformed in our lives. It is but to cozen ourſelves, to think that any thing will be an apology with God if we ourſelves do only pretend to repent, and do not reform. *To do juſtice, to walk humbly before God, and to ſhew mercy*, theſe are things beyond *thouſands of rams, and ten thouſands of rivers of oil*; more pleaſing to God than if a man ſhould *give his firſt born for his tranſgreſſion, the fruit of his body for the ſin of his ſoul*, Mic. vi. 6. *&c.*

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It ſhall be my buſineſs this day, from this ſcripture, to preſs not only what is external, and in ſhew, but what is vital, internal, ſolid and ſubſtantial in the motion of repentance, which now the nation doth profeſs in this ſolemn application unto God. Our great and loud ſins, they are the things that expoſe us to God's diſpleaſure, indignation and wrath. And becauſe generals do not affect, I ſhall inſtance in ſome particulars: our falſeneſs and treachery to the true religion, in which this nation hath proſpered above a hundred years: our affected atheiſm, and avowed profaneneſs, beyond what former times have had experience of: our wantonneſs and licentiouſneſs, diſgraceful to human nature: our high immoralities and debaucheries in ſeveral ways. Theſe have brought the judgments of God upon us, and turned God from us in diſpleaſure. And none that is ſober-minded can think otherwiſe, if he acknowledges God's government of the world, and doth conſider that wickedneſs and unrighteouſneſs are an abomination to him. For as *Moſes* told the children of *Iſrael*, Num. xxxii. 23. *Our ſins have found us out*: and as the widow of *Sarepta* ſaid, *Art thou come to call my ſins to remembrance?* 1 *Kings* xvii. 18. which words carry this intimation, that if we hear from God in a way of diſpleaſure, we ſhould ſuſpect ourſelves, and find out the *Achan* that is among us. The prophet *Micah* vi. 9. ſaith, *The Lords voice crieth unto the city*; and then it follows, *hear the rod, and who hath appointed it.*

In the words of the text, you have theſe things conſiderable.

I. The

I. The *caution* or admonition; *Be inſtructed.*

II. The *ground* and reaſons thereof; *leſt my ſoul depart from thee; leſt I make thee deſolate, a land not inhabited.*

I. Concerning the former, the *caution* or admonition, there are three enquiries to be made.

Firſt, *Whereby* we are to be inſtructed?

Secondly, *Wherein* we are to be inſtructed?

Thirdly, *What it is* to be inſtructed? or the import of the words.

Firſt, For the firſt, *whereby* we are to be inſtructed? I anſwer,

By the ſtate of affairs, and by the reaſon of things, or the right of caſes.

Things themſelves ſpeak to us; *Hear the rod, and him that hath appointed it*; and this the prophet calls the Lord's voice crying to the city, *Mic.* vi. 9. and tells us, that *the man of underſtanding will be inſtructed by it.* Caſes and things, and the ſtate of affairs, gives us hints and intimations of what may befall us; they give notice and preſages of future events, and by theſe, offer notions to our minds, not to be neglected: by theſe, *Solomon*'s prudent man is inſtructed, and he doth foreſee the evil, and ſhunneth it, *Prov.* xxii. 3. He foreſeeth the evil conſequences in their antecedents. Now, this is to be ſuppoſed, that God teacheth us, by the ſtate of affairs, or by the reaſon of things, becauſe all things are ſome way or other, under God's management. Some things are appointed, ordered, and diſpoſed by

by God; in theſe he takes pleaſure, he declares his will, purpoſe and intention; and here our ſubſervience is required and commanded. Things not allowed nor warranted by God, yet are permitted by him, elſe they could not be; for God could hinder them, if he pleaſed; but God permits them for reaſons of great wiſdom and prudence, and doth not pleaſe, by his irreſiſtible power, to hinder them. By theſe we may alſo be inſtructed; and we do not enough acknowledge God in the world, if we do not think that he doth interpoſe where he is concerned: and wherein is he not concerned? Since we are required, that *whatſoever we do in word or deed, to do all to the glory of God*, 1 Cor. x. 31. Since God makes overtures to us, and gives us intimations of what becomes us to do, and how we ought to behave ourſelves in the various occurrences of human life. This is a great point of divinity, and it ſtands upon theſe foundations.

1. That God is a being of *all perfection*, of infinitely vaſt comprehenſion and underſtanding and power: and therefore he is able to attain thoſe effects, and to teach men by all things that fall under his government.

2. That things *managed* by divine wiſdom are intenſely virtual, ſignificative, expreſſive of notions, becauſe they do partake of the excellency and ſufficiency of their cauſe.

3. That God doth *nothing in vain*, nor to fewer, or leſſer purpoſes than the things are capable to promote, or be ſubſervient unto. For it concerns the wiſdom of any agent to make the beſt improvement

of

of his means: for a means is inconſiderable but as it is conducible to its end, which in itſelf may be four, or coſtly; only conſiderable, as in reſpect to it's end.

4. Becauſe the affairs of mankind are the *choice piece* of the adminiſtration of *providence*: and God doth in a ſpecial manner, charge himſelf with teaching the mind of man knowledge. Wherefore we may gather ſomething directive of us, from all God's operations, or permiſſions in the world. *In that day* (ſaith the prophet, *Iſa.* xxii. 12.) *did the Lord of Hoſts call to weeping and mourning, and to baldneſs, &c.* viz. by the ſtate of things. And it is this our Saviour complains of, *Luke* xii. 56. *Ye hypocrites, ye can diſcern the face of the ſky, and of the earth: but how is it that ye cannot diſcern this time?* Upon this account it is ſaid, that the *goodneſs of God leads men to repentance*; and therefore he complains, *Rev.* ii. 21. That *he gave them ſpace to repent, but they repented not.* The patience of God, in not inflicting puniſhment, was an intimation to repent. And becauſe men were wanting herein, the Pſalmiſt ſaith, *Pſal.* xxviii. 5. *They underſtood not the works of God, nor the operation of his hands*; but went on to tempt the Lord, and to provoke him to anger. In this ſenſe it is ſaid, *Job* v. 6. That *afflictions riſe not out of the duſt*: no man's afflictions are wholly caſual or contingent, but are directed by an intelligent agent; of which he may make a certain interpretation to his own advantage; and may make the interpretation to a determined uſe: for all things, ſome way or other, refer to God; and as God is concerned

cerned in them, they are inſtructions of righteouſneſs, whether God does them, or only ſuffers them to be done; whether he rewards or puniſhes; as I might inſtance in ſeveral things. When *Joſeph*'s brethren ſold him into *Egypt*, in reſpect of ſecond cauſes, there is one account of it; and in reſpect of the firſt, another; *they did it for harm, but God deſigned it for good*, Gen. xlv. 5. There was a very different intention in our Lord and Saviour's death as it referred to the malicious *Jews*: in theſe 'twas an expreſſion of the greateſt malice and wickedneſs; but God turned it to good, intending it as an *expiatory ſacrifice* to all thoſe that repent. *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* were not barely puniſhed for their own ſakes, but for an example to all generations that afterwards ſhould live ungodly, *Jude* vii. and *Heb.* iv. 11. and 1 *Cor.* x. 6. *Theſe things are our examples, to the intent that we ſhould not luſt after evil things, as they alſo luſted.* I will ſatisfy myſelf with one place more, and that is the anſwer which our Saviour returned to *John Baptiſt*'s queſtion *whether he was the perſon that was to come, or they were to look for another?* Our Saviour doth not anſwer them that *John* ſent, as it may be they expected, by words, but by things, *Go and tell John what things you have ſeen and heard*, (Luke vii. 22.) *how the blind ſee, the lame walk, the lepers are cleanſed, the deaf hear, and the dead are raiſed.* Our Saviour would have him to underſtand by things, as well as by words; by things done, rather than by words ſpoken; and by theſe, *John* might underſtand who he was. And our Saviour upbraids thoſe cities where his mighty works were done

done, becauſe they believed not: and tells them that *Tyre*, and *Sidon*, yea, even *Sodom* would have repented, if the mighty works had been done among them, which had been done in thoſe cities, *Matth.* xi. 20. This therefore is a certain truth, and of great uſe; and ſhews that a man hath ſomething to do to know God in the world, that a man hath reaſon whereby to make interpretation of occurrences that happen; for if a man would know God in the world, he muſt both obſerve and take notice of his providence, and what falls out in the world, and make interpretation of what is under God's management and government. But becauſe there may be great danger of making falſe interpretations of providence, I will lay down this caution.

All ſuch *interpretations* of occurrences of providence are to be made according to the principles of common *reaſon*, and the plain guidance of the holy ſcripture: not particular fancy, but the plain guidance of the holy ſcripture: ſo ſhall we be ſecure from raſh cenſure, and uncharitableneſs on the one hand; and from the folly of ſuperſtition, and wild enthuſiaſm on the other hand; which hath been ſo remarkably prejudicial to the world, and brought ſuch ſcandal on religion.

And for this we have our Saviour's example, *Luke* xiii. 2. When they came and ask'd him how great ſinners they were, whoſe blood *Pilate* mingled with their ſacrifices; he told them, that the import of that, and all other occurrences of like nature ſerved for their admonition and to inſtruct them that *unleſs they did repent they ſhould periſh*. But he rejects their uncharitable

uncharitable application, as if they were greater ſinners than others. Let us therefore interpret ourſelves into our known duty, ſuch as theſe, to fear God greatly in his judgments, to reverence him, to leave off to ſin, to repent, and amend our lives: ſo ſhall we, as we ought, acknowledge God in all his works. And ſo I have done with that head, *whereby* God doth inſtruct us.

Secondly, Wherein are we to be inſtructed? I anſwer, in two things.

1. In matters of *God's offence.*
2. In inſtances of *our own duty.*

1. In matters of *God's offence*; for we are highly concerned in God's favour or diſpleaſure: for in his favour there is life; and if we walk in the light of his countenance, he will put joy and gladneſs into our hearts. By *his favour our mountain is made ſtrong; but when he hideth his face, we are troubled*: if he withdraw himſelf, we preſently fall into confuſion; therefore prays the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* xxxviii. 1. *Rebuke me not in thine anger, leſt thine arrows ſtick faſt within me.* We have many ſad effects of God's wrath all along in ſcripture. *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God; for our God is a conſuming fire.* And therefore, *Moſes* was afraid of God's diſpleaſure becauſe of the people's ſins, and *fell down before the Lord forty days and forty nights, neither eating bread nor drinking water*, Deut. ix. 18.

There is no defence for that man who is in danger in reſpect of God; and the deſperateneſs of the condition lies further in this; that this miſchief is not alone: but a wounded conſcience accompanies

it: and this is a misery beyond all expression, to have almighty God, whose power no one can withstand, engaged against a person, and to have our own conscience accusing, and condemning us also; this is a state which causes astonishment, both from without, and from within: a man then will be afraid to stay at home, or to enjoy his own thoughts, because of the troublesomeness and uneasiness of his own mind. And who can interpose in this case? what can comfort, when God and conscience doth condemn, and give testimony against a man? these are testimonies, against which there can be no objection; God's omniscience, and our own conscience. Upon this comes the case which the prophet represents, *Isa.* xxxiii. 14. *The sinners in Sion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites: who among us shall dwell with devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?* Thus it is, if there be not a true understanding between God and us, and if we have not peace within, saith the wise man, *Prov.* xviii. 14. *A wounded spirit who can bear?* So much for the first thing, wherein we are instructed; the matters of *God's offence.*

2. In the matters of *our duty*; that is, if we know it, to do it, if we have departed from it, to return unto it. If we have done the contrary, to revoke it with self-condemnation and humble deprecation. And if this be our case, let us be gainers at least in this way, by our former losses; to become more sensible of our necessary dependance upon God because of our frailty; to be more modest and humble, more cautious and wary, that we do not in like

manner

manner offend again. And ſo much for the two firſt, *whereby*, and *wherein* we ſhould be inſtructed.

Thirdly, *What it is* to be inſtructed? or the import of the words: and they comprehend theſe four gradual acts.

1. To *ſearch and examine.*
2. To *weigh and conſider.*
3. To *underſtand and diſcern.*
4. To *do and perform.*

In the book of the proverbs, we have wiſdom perſonating a loving and tender parent, directing and perſwading his ſon to receive inſtruction. By wiſdom I here underſtand conſideration and diſcretion, advertency and weighing of things in the ballance of ſevere and impartial reaſon; in oppoſition to that giddineſs and folly, that betrays men to vice and wickedneſs, and all kinds of immorality. For folly and inconſideration are the cauſes of the great depravation and apoſtacy of mankind. There is nothing baſer and more unbecoming mankind, ſince the beauty and excellency of human nature conſiſts in the perfection of reaſon and underſtanding, than to neglect the uſe thereof, and chuſe and prefer the condition of beaſts. Men are vicious, and act like beaſts, becauſe they are wilful, careleſs, unreaſonable, incogitant, inadvertent; not conſidering the rules and meaſures of nature, and of reaſon; for human nature is indued with rational ſelf-reflecting faculties; able to diſcern the eſſential differences of good and evil, and to obſerve what things conduce to its happineſs or miſery. It is moſt natural and eaſy for theſe faculties to embrace, and purſue thoſe

objects, which are moſt agreeable to them. All ſober reaſon is for the ways and practice of virtue. Vice is contrary to nature, and to a man's intereſt; it is againſt the reaſon of mankind: and till a man has forced himſelf, and miſerably abuſed his nature he will not conſent unto it: and then we may except againſt that man's reaſon or judgment, becauſe of his practice. For the *philoſopher* hath told us, that the wickedneſs of a man's life and practice, doth vitiate and marr the very principles of his mind: and we muſt never bring a monſter as an argument againſt what is natural.

Be *inſtructed*; that is, capable to receive inſtruction; ſo 'tis in the *Hebrew.** Here God threatens and menaces. It is God's intention and expectation, that his threatnings, caſtigations and menaces, ſhould awaken ſinners to conſideration, put them upon amendment. For *when God's judgments are abroad in the earth, the inhabitants of the world ſhould learn righteouſneſs.* 'Tis expected, that his *afflictions ſhould work the peaceable fruits of righteouſneſs, to them that are exerciſed thereby*, Heb. xii. 11. And the prophet *Amos* iv. from the 6. to the laſt, complains, that though they had been ſo and ſo corrected, yet they had not turned to the Lord. And the prophet ſaith, *Why ſhould they be ſmitten any more, for they will revolt more and more*, Iſa. i. 5. We ſhould take it for granted, all that is from God, toward us

* Significat, conſtringere, cohibere, corrigere aliquem, diſciplina, legibus, vinculis, pœna.

in

in this ſtate; whether it be declarations of his will, or denunciation of his judgments or ſignifications of his diſpleaſure, or caſtigations inflicted, or his patient forbearance: they are all intended by God as teaching piety, and inſtructions of righteouſneſs. God is not at all pleaſed with our ſufferings, for what can ſinner's neceſſitated ſufferings ſignify? of what value is it for a man to lie under thoſe evils, which he cannot eſcape if he would? how inſignificant is this? nothing is morally virtuous, but what is our choice. It is not at all pleaſing to God, or ſatisfactory to him, to grieve the children of men. Yea, rather God looks upon it as a ſecond evil, and himſelf as fruſtrated and diſappointed in his endeavours to bring us to God, if we be not reformed, and inſtructed; if we be not effectually amended. For *why ſhould ye be ſmitten any more, ye will revolt more and more*, Iſa. i. 5. And *I will not puniſh your daughters when they commit whoredom*, Hoſ. iv. 14. He accounts it a farther offence, and a new provocation unto him, when men are inſenſible or contumacious. In this caſe men are in danger, either of *greater judgments*, or to be delivered up to *reprobacy of mind*, the moſt deſperate ſtate. It was *Cain*'s temper to complain, and not to repent. It is repreſented as the very caſe of the damned, *Rev.* xvi. 19. that they *blaſphemed God becauſe of their plagues, but repented not to give glory to him. Joſhua*'s council to *Achan*, was that he ſhould *confeſs his ſin, and give glory to God*, Joſ. vii. 4.

If we conſider the admonition in the text with the context; we ſhall find cauſe to take notice of the mercy and patience of God in his unwillingneſs to deſtroy, verſe 6. *Thus ſaith the Lord of Hoſts; hew ye down the trees, and caſt a mount againſt Jeruſalem; this is the city to be viſited.* God had given the enemies commiſſion to deſtroy them; here is deſtruction, as it were, in execution: but here, in the text, he ſeems to make a ſtop, and ſuſpend his diſpleaſure, and thus to reaſon, *muſt it needs be ſo?* Is there no remedy? May we not yet be reconciled? Is it not poſſible to bring them to repent? Though evil be determined, though upon the execution; yet if they repent, their ruin may be prevented. Wherefore, as it is, *Amos* iv. 12. *Prepare to meet thy God, O Iſrael.* God intimates thus much; I am placable, ready to lay aſide my diſpleaſure; we may yet be reconciled, if thou wilt return to a right underſtanding. This I obſerve from the relation of the verſe to the former.

But now, to ſpeak ſhortly to the particulars, *what 'tis*, to be inſtructed.

1. *Search and examine* the number, weight and meaſure of thine iniquities, verſe 7. *As a fountain caſteth forth waters, ſo ſhe caſteth out her iniquities; violence and ſpoil is heard in her.*

2. *Weigh and conſider* how unjuſtifiable, how unreaſonable are provocations on our part, while there is patience on God's. *Deut.* xxxii. 6. *Do ye thus requite the Lord, ye fooliſh people, and unwiſe?* Numb. xiv. 11. *How long will this people provoke me? How long will it be, e're ye believe me, for all the ſigns that I have ſhewed among you?* 3. *Under-*

3. *Underſtand and diſcern*: have fixed and ſtayed apprehenſions in your mind. Impreſſions of good things ſlip out of our minds, if they be not conſidered: therefore *David* prays for the people, 1 *Chron.* xxix. 18. *Keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the hearts of thy people.* There are three acts belonging to a wiſe man.

To have an inſpection into things *preſent*.

To have reſpect to things *paſt*, from which comes experience.

To provide againſt *future events*, and prepare for things to come, even for the worſt. Be *inſtructed*, foreſee, and diſcern future miſchiefs following upon pertinacious continuance in ſin: ſee the iſſues of things in their own cauſes, and conſequents in their antecedents.

4. *Do and perform*, as becomes an intelligent agent, when he is made ſenſible and apprehenſive, *Prov.* xxii. 3. *The prudent man forſeeth the evil and hideth himſelf, but the ſimple paſs on and are puniſhed.* Whatſoever was before, was but preparatory to this and incompleat without it, *viz. examining, conſidering*, and *underſtanding*; we muſt *execute* and *perform* and do accordingly, things muſt be ſecured by future acts; *things but half done, will quickly be undone*, for things run back again if not ſettled by us into action: we muſt not give over till all be finiſhed. Things are not put *in ultimo actu*, till there be a refinement of our ſpirits, and a reformation of our lives: that is the end of all before. Things unperfected, go back again of their own accord. Nothing is ſettled, till it be in its ſtate. We muſt attain the

regenerate

regenerate ſtate, the juſtified ſtate; theſe are the ſettlements and foundations of religion. None more deceive themſelves, than they who think their religion is true and genuine; tho' it refines not their ſpirits, and reforms not their lives, *James* i. 27. As by other principles, the ſubjects of them are conſtituted *in habitu*; ſo it is likewiſe in this caſe. Humility doth not only *denominate*, but *affect*; ſo in *reliquis virtutibus*.

Now ſinners, who are called evil-doers and workers of iniquity, they fail in all theſe duties: for they are either ignorant and inapprehenſive, or elſe careleſs and incogitant; or elſe vainly fraught and poſſeſt; or wilful and preſumptuous.

1. *Ignorant and unapprehenſive*; notwithſtanding all the means they have to attain knowledge and underſtanding, as never having been awakened; and a man is no body where he hath not thought and conſidered. For God and nature brought us into this world with powers and faculties; but habits are acquired by conſideration and exerciſe, improving our powers through God's aſſiſtance. The want of principles of knowledge proves miſchievous, for *without knowledge the heart is not good*: and God by the prophet complains, *Hoſ.* iv. 6. That *his people periſh for want of knowledge*.

2. They are *careleſs and incogitant*. This is generally true of all thoſe that live in ſin, who are neglective of God, and defective in the right uſe of themſelves. This the philoſopher tells us, *Every one that ſinneth, is ignorant*; that is, he is either fundamentally ignorant, as having been a perſon of no education

education, no uſe and improvement of his natural powers and faculties; or elſe, he hath been inadvertent and regardleſs. And thus many live, as it were, *without God in the world*; forget God, not having their ſenſes exerciſed to perceive and diſcern; having no affection nor devotion towards him; have no regard to their future glory, nor to their ſoul's immortality; do good and bad, without difference or diſtinction; confound the ſenſe of good and evil; they think not on the future account, nor upon eternity. Thus did not *David*; for he tells us, *Pſal.* cxix. 59. That *he conſidered his ways, and turned his feet unto God's teſtimonies.* The wicked, on the contrary, are ſaid to *forget God*, Pſal. l. 22. Job viii. 13. *They call not on his name*, Pſal. lxxix. 6. They live but to gratify ſenſe, pamper their fleſh, and feed the beaſt, *Rom.* xiii. 14. *They make proviſion for the fleſh to fulfil the luſts thereof.* They make it the buſineſs and employment of their mind and underſtanding to cater for the body. their reaſonable ſouls only ſerve for ſalt to keep the body from ſtench and putrefaction.

3. *Vainly fraught*, and poſſeſs'd, ſo as to flatter themſelves, deceive their own ſouls, put themſelves into a fool's paradiſe, live in a lie, go on blindfold to deſtruction. Fancy and humour, and not the reaſon and truth of things rule in their lives. Or elſe,

4. They are *wilful and deſperate*, caſting off all obligations to God, and *hold the truth in unrighteouſneſs*; make havock of conſcience; *turn the grace of God into wantonneſs*, and contract reprobacy of mind, and ſay with them, 1 *Cor.* xv. 32. *Let us eat*

and

and drink, for to morrow we muſt die. Come, ſay they, fetch wine, and we will fill ourſelves with ſtrong drink, and to morrow ſhall be as this day, and much more abundant, Iſa. lvi. 12.

Thus have you had an account of the *caution*, and admonition: be inſtructed.

II. Now for the *inforcement*. *Leſt my ſoul depart from thee; leſt I make thee deſolate, a land not inhabited.*

Leſt my ſoul depart from thee; theſe words are a metaphor taken from a member put out of joint, that cannot be ſet again; it is of the ſame import with that we read, *Ezek.* xxiii. 18. *So ſhe diſcovered her whoredoms, and my mind was alienated from her*: and *Heb.* x. 38. *My ſoul ſhall have no pleaſure in him.* The meaning of God in all ſuch expreſſions, is, that we ſhould return unto him; therefore here obſerve, how hardly doth God forget his relation to his people? how doth he inforce his arguments? he gives admonition; and how doth he inforce and back it, that they may take notice, God's meaning is, they ſhould return to him, becauſe of his forwardneſs to admoniſh? in theſe words you have a double argument.

Argumentum amoris, &
Argumentum timoris.

1. An argument of *love and good will*, leſt my ſoul depart from thee. 2. An argument from *fear*, *leſt I make thee deſolate*. A double argument is as a double teſtimony, by which every word is eſtabliſhed, 2 *Cor.* xiii. 1. Here is an obligation upon ingenuity: and the conſtraints of neceſſity. This double argument ſhews us two things. 1. The

1. The *ſtupidity and ſenſeleſſneſs* of thoſe who are made to the perfection of reaſon and underſtanding, and yet act contrary to it.

2. The *impiety* and *unrighteouſneſs* of ſinners, who are a real offence to God, cauſe his diſpleaſure, and bring upon perſons and places, ruin and deſtruction. For can any one imagine that it is a matter of nothing, that man, who is endued with mind and underſtanding, and ſo made capable of God, to live in a conſtant neglect of God, and abuſe of thoſe principles, whereby he is capable to ſerve God?

Since all the ways of *God*, are ways of righteouſneſs, judgment and truth, in whom there is fulneſs of power and liberty; yet cannot by power pervert that which is right: is it to be endured by the Governor of the world, that a limited creature, of bounden duties, ſhould extend liberty to the confounding of order and right, and all difference between good and evil? that he ſhould take liberty to the introducing of all confuſion and diſorder in the family of God (for the whole world is his family) and live in the violation of all the laws of righteouſneſs, goodneſs and truth, which are the laws of heaven. Let us think impartially, and judge righteous judgment.

Now becauſe ſome think that ſin is a trifle, and wonder that God ſhould think himſelf concerned to reſtrain and limit his creatures, in what they have amind to do; that God ſhould refuſe to let them enjoy that liberty; that God ſhould deny his creatures ſatisfaction. I ſhall therefore ſhew that thoſe things which we call ſinful, have an intrinſick malignity

malignity in them; and therefore are forbidden by God, becauſe of their naughtineſs.

And for further ſecurity to us againſt ſuch poiſon, God (out of his care for us) hath ſuperadded the uſe of his *own authority* over us, and *our intereſt* (which in all reaſon ought to prevail with us) that we ſhould not do ourſelves that miſchief; that we ſhould not meddle with what is ſo hurtful and dangerous.

This may be ſaid concerning the liberty, that by our Saviour we are brought into: *that in the ſtate of the goſpel, I know nothing forbidden, which one of true reaſon would deſire to have liberty to do.* There is intrinſick rancour, venom, and malignity in every ſin, tho' in ſeveral degrees: and this I will ſhew in four particulars.

1. Sin is a *variation from the law and rule of God's creation*: It is contrary to the order of reaſon: and when I ſay this, I ſay as bad as can be ſpoken. Every ſin is againſt the order of reaſon, againſt the law and rule of God's creation: and it is unnatural to the ſtate of a creature. What other creature in nature doth vary from the ſtate of it's creation, but man? who ought to be moſt regular, conſtant and uniform. If the reſt of the creatures ſhould do ſo, the world would ſoon be turned into a chaos and confuſion. If the ſea ſhould do ſo, it would ſoon overflow all its banks. If the ſun ſhould give no more light, but be the cauſe of ſtench and putrefaction; that inſtead of the ſplendid rays, which he caſts upon the world, and revives thoſe things by, which are below, it ſhould ſend forth noiſom vapours, how would the univerſe be unfurniſhed and diſordered?

The

1. The *ſtupidity and ſenſeleſſneſs* of thoſe who are made to the perfection of reaſon and underſtanding, and yet act contrary to it.

2. The *impiety* and *unrighteouſneſs* of ſinners, who are a real offence to God, cauſe his diſpleaſure, and bring upon perſons and places, ruin and deſtruction. For can any one imagine that it is a matter of nothing, that man, who is endued with mind and underſtanding, and ſo made capable of God, to live in a conſtant neglect of God, and abuſe of thoſe principles, whereby he is capable to ſerve God?

Since all the ways of *God*, are ways of righteouſneſs, judgment and truth, in whom there is fulneſs of power and liberty; yet cannot by power pervert that which is right: is it to be endured by the Governor of the world, that a limited creature, of bounden duties, ſhould extend liberty to the confounding of order and right, and all difference between good and evil? that he ſhould take liberty to the introducing of all confuſion and diſorder in the family of God (for the whole world is his family) and live in the violation of all the laws of righteouſneſs, goodneſs and truth, which are the laws of heaven. Let us think impartially, and judge righteous judgment.

Now becauſe ſome think that ſin is a trifle, and wonder that God ſhould think himſelf concerned to reſtrain and limit his creatures, in what they have amind to do; that God ſhould refuſe to let them enjoy that liberty; that God ſhould deny his creatures ſatisfaction. I ſhall therefore ſhew that thoſe things which we call ſinful, have an intrinſick malignity

malignity in them; and therefore are forbidden by God, becauſe of their naughtineſs.

And for further ſecurity to us againſt ſuch poiſon, God (out of his care for us) hath ſuperadded the uſe of his *own authority* over us, and *our intereſt* (which in all reaſon ought to prevail with us) that we ſhould not do ourſelves that miſchief; that we ſhould not meddle with what is ſo hurtful and dangerous.

This may be ſaid concerning the liberty, that by our Saviour we are brought into: *that in the ſtate of the goſpel, I know nothing forbidden, which one of true reaſon would deſire to have liberty to do.* There is intrinſick rancour, venom, and malignity in every ſin, tho' in ſeveral degrees: and this I will ſhew in four particulars.

1. Sin is a *variation from the law and rule of God's creation*: It is contrary to the order of reaſon: and when I ſay this, I ſay as bad as can be ſpoken. Every ſin is againſt the order of reaſon, againſt the law and rule of God's creation: and it is unnatural to the ſtate of a creature. What other creature in nature doth vary from the ſtate of it's creation, but man? who ought to be moſt regular, conſtant and uniform. If the reſt of the creatures ſhould do ſo, the world would ſoon be turned into a chaos and confuſion. If the ſea ſhould do ſo, it would ſoon overflow all its banks. If the ſun ſhould give no more light, but be the cauſe of ſtench and putrefaction; that inſtead of the ſplendid rays, which he caſts upon the world, and revives thoſe things by, which are below, it ſhould ſend forth noiſom vapours, how would the univerſe be unfurniſhed and diſordered?

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The like may be ſaid of all other creatures, which if they ſhould act as irregularly, and unnaturally as man, every thing would be brought into diſorder and confuſion, and the world turned into a chaos. What is it in human nature to do contrary to the order of reaſon, and law of heaven? It is a phraſe characteriſtical of venom and malignity; to which there can be no compariſon.

2. In ſin, there is open and manifeſt *neglect of God*, to whom all reverence and regard is moſt due. For whoſoever converts himſelf inordinately to the creature, averts himſelf from God; and then, what becomes of our due acknowledgements to God, and thankfulneſs, than which, nothing in the world is more reaſonable; for, *the ox knoweth his owner, and the aſs, his maſter's crib*, Iſa. i. 3.

3. By ſin, there is a *diſturbance in God's family*: (as the whole world is.) It is an interruption of that intercourſe and communication there ought to be amongſt creatures; *for every ſinner deſtroys much good*. Wherever there is irregular motions, agents will interfere; and hence ariſe exaſperations, contradiction and offence. Were mankind regular in their motions, and confined themſelves to warrantable actions, there would be nothing of diſpleaſure, paſſion, provocation or offence found among men.

4. By the practice of iniquity we *marr our ſpirits*, ſpoil our tempers, and acquire unnatural principles, and diſpoſitions. By ſin, we part with the modeſty and ingenuity of our natures. Now therefore let the atheiſtical and profane perſon be aggrieved if he can, or find fault with God, that he ſhould cut

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him ſhort, and prohibit him all irregular and exorbitant actions: ſince they are ſo contrary to human nature and ſuch a diſturbance in God's government: and ſince there is nothing in inferior nature, but what is regular and conſtant, from the firſt moment of its creation, to this hour. There is turpitude in every act of ſin; yet ſins differ: for there are ſeveral degrees of ſin; for ſins are aggravated or abated by the diſpoſition, capacities, and principles of the agent that commits them. As

1. If there be *clear light*, and fulneſs of *liberty*; then it is ſin with a high hand.

2. If ſin be committed in *doubtfulneſs* and uncertainty, then it weakens and diſables conſcience. Great regard is to be had to the innocence and tenderneſs of our own mind. The wiſe man in *Eccleſiaſticus* ſaith, thou haſt no friend in all the world ſo near to thee as the reaſon of thy own mind, therefore never treat the reaſon of thy mind unhandſomely. Treat kindly thy home reprover; there is no friend truer to thee, nor can do thee better ſervice; therefore hear it's voice, and give it ſatisfaction.

3. If men ſin through *confuſion of thoughts*, then it may be ſaid we were not ourſelves. One may ſay we were but half ourſelves, when we did it.

4. If we ſin by *miſapprehenſion* or miſtake; then we did not intend *that*, but *another* thing, when we did it.

5. If we did it by an *aſſault*, or ſudden ſupriſal, then it was as well another's fault as ours.

6. If upon *provocation*, heat of paſſion, and we revoke it as ſoon as we return to ourſelves; by this

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we make it morally void and null: for you do revoke and morally undo, that which you repent of.

7. If men ſin by ſome *careleſſneſs*, negligence, and indiligence; if we recompence it by after care, and diligence upon this coſtly experience; this alſo helps to excuſe.

I conclude with two words of admonition to two ſorts of perſons.

Firſt, To the *atheiſtical*, and profane, I earneſtly recommend to them the re-examining of things; and if they do not pretend to infallibility, I beg of them to conſider their former thoughts and reſolutions. Think again, whether the great things of religion may not be realities, *viz.* the being of a God, the immortality of the ſoul, the eſſential difference of good and evil; and future rewards and puniſhments. At leaſt do not practiſe againſt the ſenſe of theſe things; but return, and uſe thy reaſon, which if not vitiated and prepoſſeſt, will ſatisfy the *native ſenſe* of the mind. To ſay nothing now of ſcripture (which ſpeaks enough of aſſurance of what it declares; ſo that they which read it will not eaſily ſhut their hands of it, if they intend to be wicked;) *reaſon* hath ſo much to ſay for theſe great things, that the obſtinate are put upon it, to blind and blot out thoſe reaſons and arguments, which they know not what to ſay to, nor how to anſwer; which ſtick as ſo many goads in their ſides. No man but he, who is habitually evil, and hath dethroned his reaſon, and confederated with the enemy of his mind, can ſatisfy himſelf, that here is no reaſon to ſatisfy him to fear theſe great things, viz. the being of a God, the immorta-

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lity and eternity of the ſoul, and future puniſhments. If then theſe things be real, have not ſinners run a wild courſe? I will only tell them,

1. That many, who have as madly reſolved, have before their deaths found cauſe to alter their judgments in theſe matters, and thought it their ſafeſt way to deprecate their offence.

2. However they make ſhift to ſtifle the voice of conſcience at preſent, and go on to ſin; ſome others, who have ſometime done the like, have never had any true enjoyment of themſelves after ſuch wounds made in their conſcience, and breach of their peace; but either fell into confuſion of thought and perplexity of mind, or diſtraction, and have been ſometimes their own executioners, and have made an end of themſelves; rather then endure the reproofs of their conſciences, have rid themſelves out of the world.

3. Thoſe that are of raiſed intellectuals, of refined morals, of ſober reaſon, would not have upon them the guilt of ſome mens ſins (however they may eſcape judgment in this world) for all the titles, powers and revenues which ſuch men enjoy in the world. It will only give ſuch, reaſon to know, that notwithſtanding their own incompetent judgment concerning themſelves, that is true even of them, which is ſaid by *Samuel* concerning the wicked ſons of *Eli*; *they have made themſelves vile*, and contemptible. So are theſe profane and atheiſtical perſons; they are baſe in the ſight of God, and in the ſight of wiſe men: for wickedneſs doth diſrobe any man

of

of his excellency, and makes him vile and contemptible.

Secondly, To perſons engaged in ways of religion. If theſe be real and ſincere in their profeſſion, they are in a ſtate of reconciliation with God; and if in a ſtate of reconciliation with him, then let them be true to the terms of friendſhip, and not do acts of enemies in the ſtate of friendſhip. *Let them that name the name of Chriſt, depart from iniquity. Where God ſpeaks peace to his people, let them not return again to folly*, Pſal. lxxxv. 8. To the *fear of God*, in ſcripture, is always adjoined the *eſchewing of evil*; and this is the character God gives of an upright man, *Job* i. 8. It is eſſential to religion, to walk according to the difference of good and evil. There are other things which have the uſe and conſideration of the means in religion, which I call the inſtrumental part of religion: but religion itſelf, doth iſſue in holineſs, uprightneſs, integrity, and ſeparation from iniquity.

DISCOURSE IX.

The DANGER of UNFAITHFULNESS to GOD.

HEB. iii. 12.

Take heed, brethren, leſt there be in any of you, an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

RELIGION is highly concerned in two things; the judgment of truth, and the conſcience of right: and he doth ſubſtantially fail upon account of religion, that is wanting in either of theſe.

I ſhall now conſider the *reaſons* of this *caution* in the text, *Take heed, brethren,* &c. We are highly concerned to be cautious and wary, upon a fourfold account.

1. From thoſe things that are *within* us.

2. From things that are *about* us.

3. From the great *conſequence* and *importance* that truth and goodneſs hath unto our ſouls.

4. From not a *poſſibility* only, but a *probability of failing*, and miſcarrying, if care be not taken; and the greatneſs of the evil, if we do fall ſhort.

1. We had need to be wary, becauſe of thoſe things that are *within* us: for if once we conſent to iniquity, and acquaint ourſelves with evil, we put ourſelves out of an indifferency to good and evil,

vil, and ſo marr the ingenuity and modeſty of our natures. For one evil act doth beget an indiſpoſition to the contrary virtue; men become leſs competent to judge, or to do what is right, when once they have miſcarried. We do not know what wrong we do ourſelves, when we do an act contrary to right; for by this means we come to paſs into the oppoſite nature. The apoſtle doth exhort chriſtians, *Heb.* ii. 1. *That they ſhould take heed to the things that they had learned; leſt they let them ſlip, and become like leaking veſſels.* Good apprehenſions do not always ſtay with us; and contrary ones are in a ſucceſſion. This we find by experience, that we do ebb and flow, riſe and fall, go backward and forward, up and down, here and there, on and off, do and undo. Sometimes we ſee, and believe, underſtand and reſolve, and then again, we grow inſenſible of theſe good impreſſions that were upon us: and therefore *David* being well acquainted with the frail and uncertain condition of man, prays thus unto God, *Keep it in the imaginations of the thoughts of the heart of thy people*, 1 Chron. xxix. 18.

Alſo we are inclined and ſollicited from our *lower and worſer part*; from the delights of our ſenſes, which many times prove ſtrong temptations to us; and laſtly, we are often befooled by our own fancies and imaginations. *He is a wiſe man who is not his own fool.* Our ſenſe of ourſelves is more incompetent, than our judgment of others. We are ſo much given up to ſelf-flattery, that in favour of ourſelves, we conceit that of ourſelves that we do not find, and

are apt to think that of ourſelves that no body that knows us do believe; and all this from within.

2. And then from *without* us. How many things do impoſe upon us from our eaſineſs and credulity; ſo that we walk as it were in a vain ſhew, 1 *Cor.* vii. 31. and this occaſioned both from *objects* and *agents* 1 *John* ii. 16. The guiſe of the world, the manners and humours of men, theſe are ſuppoſed to be indubitable and unqueſtionable: and theſe prove a mighty temptation to us, when we look about us and ſee men ſo ſollicitous, and over-buſy, deſigning, undertaking, and engaging about the things of this life; as if a man's happineſs were altogether to be had here, and as if our preſent actions had no reference to eternity. And then *Satan*, he is a lying ſpirit in the mouths of all his falſe prophets: he is an abettor and encourager of evil; being a liar from the beginning, and one that goeth about ſeeking whom he may devour. And then *men* are deceitful and uncertain, and uſe their wits and parts to circumvent and over-reach one another. Fair repreſentations of things are made, when their real exiſtence is otherwiſe; ſo that we are many times deluded and deceived, and this is our weakneſs, we love to have it ſo; we would have men ſpeak according to our ſenſe, and not according to the reality of things. Thus it often happens, that they are grievous unto others, that do not ſpeak according to their ſenſe. We read of *Ahab*, that he hated *Micaiah*, becauſe he did not ſpeak according to his ſenſe, and as he would have him, 1 *Kings* xxii. 8. And ſo St. *Paul* ſaith, that he was their enemy becauſe he told them the truth, *Gal.* iv. 16.

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3. Then alſo, the *conſequences* of truth and real virtue to ourſelves. For, it is the proper employment of our intellectual faculties, to be converſant about God; to make enquiry after him, and to find him out in all his ways and works; to conceive aright of him, and then to reſemble and imitate him. Religion is an obligation upon us to God. The firſt motion of religion is to underſtand what is true of God; and the ſecond is, to expreſs it in our lives and to copy it out in our works: the former is our wiſdom, and the latter is our goodneſs. In theſe two conſiſts the health and pulchritude of our minds: for health to the body is not more than virtue is unto the mind. A depraved, vitious mind is as really the ſickneſs and deformity thereof, as any foul and loathſome diſeaſe is unto the body. And as really as theſe tend to the death and diſſolution of the body; ſo the vices of the mind tend to the ſeparation of God and the ſoul. If therefore it be our care to rid ourſelves of bodily diſeaſes; much more it becomes us to look after the cure of our ſouls.

4. And laſtly, the *danger* if we do not take care; for in this ſtate of probation, exerciſe and trial there are many things that are matter of temptation to us, and are intended for the exerciſe of our virtue: and in the courſe of providence God permits them, partly to awaken us to diligence and conſideration; and partly to make us to betake ourſelves to him for protection, guidance, and direction. And then gain or loſs is according as we approve ourſelves unto him.

This we may obſerve, that there are no effects in the courſe of nature, but the author of nature hath ſecured them by vigorous and effectual cauſes. And aſſure yourſelves, God is not more wanting to the higher order of his creatures: but hath taken care to ſecure the intellectual world; that part which is inveſted with reaſon and underſtanding, with liberty and freedom, and therein doth more partake of him; and he hath ſecured the effects of theſe agents by exerting vigorous and effectual cauſes. And what are they but the exerciſe of reaſon and virtue, together with divine aſſiſtance, guidance and direction? For when God made a ſpirit finite and fallible, he did intend to direct, guide and govern it, by a ſpirit infinite and infallible. And if any one of us find it not ſo, I dare ſay ſuch a perſon hath neglected and forſaken God firſt, or elſe God would not have forſaken him. For this we take for granted, that God, in the firſt creation of man, did intend to govern his mind by the aſſiſtance of the divine Spirit; and that there ſhould never have been a ſpirit finite and fallible, if it ſhould not have had relation to, and communication from the divine Spirit.

From what hath been ſaid, I ſhall make two *inferences*.

1. Then you ſee, we may not be *careleſs*, ſelf-neglective or incogitant. Some men live ſo careleſly, and upon ſuch eaſy terms in the world, as if there were no danger, nor any thing before them to gain or loſe; even as if they had nothing to do, and like *Solomon*'s ſluggard, their field is overgrown with briars

briars and thorns. But we are greatly concerned in this ſtate, and there is apparent hazard and danger of miſcarriage: for there is ſome difficulty in what is to be done, and this difficulty encreaſeth, the longer we neglect our duty; and it multiplies, by how much the more we have abuſed ourſelves. For, *a man hath himſelf as he uſeth himſelf.* If a man hath alienated himſelf from God, by conſenting to known iniquity, it is the great mercy of God, if ever he be reſtored; and when it is done, it muſt be by repentance and renovation. The firſt work of religion is to judge and perceive, and this is a work of ſkill; and therefore, for us to be unawakened and careleſs, not to employ our higheſt faculties in this work, is irrational and unaccountable, unworthy of an intelligent agent. In worldly affairs that are of any moment, we judge a perſon highly culpable that doth not uſe his reaſon and judgment. If a man miſcarry for want of this, we can hardly pity a man in ſo ſhameful a caſe; we hardly think him an object of charity, that will not work for his living, and does not that which in him is, to make proviſion for himſelf. For a man that is endued with reaſon and underſtanding, to ſay, *I did not think*, I never took the matter into conſideration, is no other than the account of a fool. Really I wonder how any man can ſatisfy himſelf, to think that he is religious in any degree, and yet take no care to inform himſelf in neceſſary truth: who doth not make it his buſineſs, to ſet up a throne of judgment in his own ſoul. For, if he ſtick here, he cannot go any farther. For if he hath any thing

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that he calls religion, it is but ſuperſtition and blind devotion. But this, though it be what is *firſt* in religion, yet it is not *all* a man hath to do: for when a man hath eſtabliſhed a throne of judgment in his own ſoul, and is able to put a difference between good and evil, right and wrong; then, *Secondly*, he muſt reform himſelf according to ſuch knowledge, and always hold himſelf to that, which his judgment tells him is the good and right. Theſe two things, I declare to you, are ſolid and ſubſtantial in religion; neceſſary and indiſpenſible, and a man doth but befool himſelf, to account himſelf religious if he fail in either of theſe: If he fail in the judgment of right and wrong; and if after his judgment he doth not anſwerably reform himſelf in his life and actions: ſuch a man's religion is ſo cheap, that as it coſts him nothing, ſo it is worth nothing. A man may pick and gather his religion in the wilderneſs of the world: ſuch a man may be born among the heathen, and converſe with beaſts, and never look after himſelf, and yet be religious upon ſuch an account. If therefore you have ſouls to ſave, and bear true reſpect to God, be ſure you take care for right information, and then be ſure to refine and reform your ſpirits, and your lives, according to your judgments. For, if after this, a man ſhould fail in particular practice, he will be ſelf-condemned; upon which doth follow the worm of conſcience, and that fire which goeth not out. It is a vain thing for a man to call that an action of religion, which is not an act of the underſtanding: for that is not a religious act, which is not human. For we all ſay, that

that which doth not proceed from the judgment of the mind, and choice of the will, is not an *human act*, though the act of a man. And if it doth not arise to the degree of an *human act*, I am sure it cannot be a *religious* act. It is therefore indispensibly necessary to religion, that every man, according to his capacity, condition, and opportunity, take care to inform his understanding, that so he may have the judgment of truth; and after this, to comply with his judgment in practice.

2. I infer from what hath been said, that we are not altogether to *refer ourselves to others*, but to employ our own faculties, and improve our own advantages and opportunities, and to see with our own eyes; for, otherwise we do not answer our *ends*; for, without this, a man grows to be less, and goes backward the longer he lives, and the older he grows; unless he improves his rational faculties, which is the proper perfection of intellectual nature. We ought to look upon this *judgment of truth*, and discerning, not only by way of privilege, and as a security against forgery, superstition and slavery; but also as a charge and duty. It is incumbent upon us to look after information, in order to reformation and amendment: because without knowledge the heart cannot be good. But then the heart is not sanctified from knowledge alone: for there must be first knowledge, and then virtue. I dare assure you no man can be religious by another man's knowledge, nor any thing of another's; no more than a man that is sick, can be well by his neighbour's health. In matters of this nature, 'tis every body

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for himſelf. For theſe perfections of the mind, virtue and goodneſs, are not communicable, as other things are: they do not paſs as eſtates, and money, and the like: but they paſs by mental illumination, by propoſing each to other, and by the receiver's conſideration, and his own imbibing of that which is offered.

But here now I come to the caſe of *implicit faith*, ſo much applauded in the church of *Rome*. I will tell you in few words, the ſtate of implicit faith. In ſome caſes I think it may and ought to be allowed, but in others not. As,

1. I do expreſs an *implicit faith in God*, in thoſe things that God hath not revealed ſo plainly and fully: for in theſe things, tho' the ſcripture declare them in ſome form of words, yet I cannot reach the ſenſe that is contained in them. Suppoſe there be a place of ſcripture about ſome notion that doth tranſcend the reach of human reaſon, and which is knowable only by divine revelation; and divine revelation is comprehended in a form of words that I cannot fully underſtand; in this caſe I refer myſelf to God, and believe that that is true which God intended in thoſe words. This I call an *implicit faith in God*.

2. There are ſome caſes, in which God hath revealed himſelf *ſo far, and no farther*: here I know no more than God hath revealed; and it is *learned ignorance* to know no more than God doth ſay: and an implicit faith in theſe two ſenſes, is the reſignation of a man's underſtanding to God; and a great expreſſion of our obedience to him. For we ſhould

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be as willing to be ignorant where God hath not declared, as we ſhould be ready and forward to know and underſtand all that he hath revealed. In this ſenſe therefore I applaud and allow an implicit faith: and I think they have been buſy, and created a great deal of diſturbance in the church of God, that have been over induſtrious to make out the revelation of God, beyond what God hath ſaid, or that will impoſe upon others, their own ſenſe. But ſuch an implicit faith as I have declared, I do allow: for it is becoming, in reſpect of God; and it doth ſhew us to be modeſt and teachable; and that we do not make religion for ourſelves, but receive our religion from God.

3. Then again. Another account of implicit faith is this, which is virtuous and highly commendable, being the *neceſſity of the caſe*, viz. That every one do reſt in his teacher a while. Perſons that are at preſent without inſtruction, or the advantage of education, muſt believe thoſe that have theſe advantages: as thoſe that are without learning, muſt believe ſcholars for the tranſlation of the bible: and this implicit faith is not to be blamed, but is the neceſſity of the caſe, and cannot be avoided: for the truth is, every man as a *learner* muſt believe, and give credit to his teacher, but yet let him not depend upon his teacher more than needs muſt, nor no longer than need require: for you ought not to think that you muſt be in the ſtate of a learner all the days of your life. A child muſt believe what is told him at firſt, that this letter is ſo called, and that two letters put together ſpell ſo much; but after a while

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he comes to ſee the reaſon thereof as well as his teacher; and will not be content always to be in the ſtate of a child; but will, as he ought, uſe the privilege of his nature, and the judgment of diſcerning, and ſee with his own eyes. And I muſt tell you, he is a very unhappy man that hath lived twenty, thirty, or forty years in the world, and hath never done that which is the peculiar and proper action of human nature, that is, to uſe reaſon, underſtanding and judgment; but lived all the days of his life, like a meer animal, and below his kind; having not put forth any of thoſe acts which do moſt properly belong unto him, as a rational being.

We condemn credulity in the *Romiſh* church, as we have good reaſon to do: but I muſt tell you that abſolute reference of a man's ſelf to others, is the very ſelf ſame thing in the proteſtant religion; and thoſe men (whatever they profeſs) are but *Papiſts* in it; neither can ſuch perſons approve themſelves to be inveſted with reaſon and underſtanding, for they have not put forth any of thoſe acts of judgment and diſtinguiſhing, which belong to reaſon; which is the height and excellency of human nature: they have not acted as intelligent agents; but have ſunk down into the animal life. I confeſs it is our neceſſity, for ſome part of our lives, to believe and give credit; but when we are inſtructed, we muſt awaken our own faculties; ſearch, conſider, examine, weigh and reſolve with ourſelves; that it is ſo upon the evidence of light and reaſon, that the thing itſelf ſpeaks. We muſt not live and die in this ſtate, where there is not a judgment of diſcern-

diſcerning: for in this ſtate, both mens minds and conſciences are defiled. How unſatisfactory would it be to a man, were he not in a ſpiritual lethargy, to be unacquainted with the true principles of life; and that he ſhould take this to be good, and that to be evil, only becauſe he is told ſo. In all other matters wherein men are concerned about the things of this life, they would not have patience, to ſit down ſatisfied without making due ſearch and enquiry: but matters of religion are of the greateſt importance to us; and therefore, here is our ſpecial employment, and herein we ought to ſhew our greateſt care and diligence. Theſe are things of greateſt weight, and moment; and there is nothing to be alledged to the contrary. And really, we do in ſubſtance agree with the papiſts, that do uſurp and impoſe upon us and we juſtify their practice: they call men to *blind obedience*; and we practiſe it if we do not according to our ability, and parts, ſet up within us a throne of judgment, by virtue of which we refine our ſpirits, and reform our lives. This would make a good man; and if he ſhould happen to miſtake, this would yet preſerve him, for that which doth proceed from judgment of truth, as the perſon doth think and ſuppoſe, though there be a miſtake; the vice of the mind is abated, and the man will rather be pitied and compaſſionated, than condemned. He doth act, becauſe it is his judgment, becauſe he hath examined; and finds cauſe ſo to think, after he hath heard, learnt, prayed and conſidered. If after all this, the man is miſtaken at laſt, he is pardonable, and his caſe compaſſionable.

But

But if he hath a private judgment, and hath not uſed due care for better information; he is inexcuſable: and if he be not reformed according to his judgment, then he is ſelf-condemned.

This is a point of great weight, and it lies at the foundation of religion. But alas! alas! I loſe my labour as to the greateſt part of the world; for though liberty of judgment be every one's right, yet how few are there that make uſe of this right? For the uſe of this right doth depend upon ſelf-improvement by meditation, conſideration, examination, prayer, and the like. Theſe are things antecedent, and pre-requiſite; for a man doth not leap into a judgment; he is born only with faculties, but theſe cannot immediately produce theſe acts. For it is not in the intellectual world, as in the world natural: for there doth the ſun no ſooner appear, but there is light from the eaſt to the weſt; and if the wind blow, it blows, we know not how far. But in the intellectual world, a man is born only with faculties, powers and principles; but all habits are acquired, and men attain them by particular acts. No man is born with habits; but every man hath himſelf as he uſeth himſelf; and he that hath never conſidered, weighed and ſearched, he knows but little upon this account. Hence it is, that a great many perſons are in an incapacity, (however they may flatter themſelves) concerning acts of judgment. For that man's judgment is not worth a ruſh, in any caſe whatſoever, that hath not examined, often thought upon, and enquired into things. Men ſhould conſider, and make it their buſineſs

buſineſs to be informed in the difference of things, and make due application to God to teach their underſtandings knowledge; or elſe, 'tis not to be expected that they ſhould arrive at a true and right judgment. Therefore I do reſolve it much ſafer of the two, for one that is blind, or is not at leiſure to weigh and conſider, and ſo to receive inſtruction, to chooſe a wiſe and good perſon to follow, and to make him his guide, than to attempt to go alone. For he was born only to a poſſibility, becauſe of his natural parts: but faculties you muſt put no confidence in, unleſs they be qualify'd and ſeconded by habits; and no habits are, if not acquired; and acquiſition is by mental, rational, and ſpiritual improvement.

None ſo miſcarry, as the preſumptuous beyond their own ſufficiency; they who aſſume to themſelves where they are not prepared and qualified. Such as are ſober, and modeſt, know much better than others: and yet they are loath to ſpeak, fearful of being miſtaken. But others there are, that are blind and unawakened ever ſince they came into the world, and yet they are confident, arrogant, preſumptuous and ſelf-ſufficient. The modeſt man will not venture beyond his own ſtrength; he is very receptive of all direction; glad of information, but the preſumptuous man, though blind, he is bold and confident; becauſe he is moſt ignorant. So that you ſee this argument of private judgment is modeſt and humble; and grows only in God's garden. And this is the privilege of human nature; yea incumbent upon us all: and we ought ſo to employ our-

ſelves

ſelves, that we may arrive to a perfection of judgment; and conſequently upon judgment, to a right frame and temper of mind.

Now all this I have diſcourſed upon this argument of judgment of truth, and conſcience of right, which are things that have great place in religion; and wherein if we will have any foundation for our profeſſion, and denominate ourſelves chriſtians, from true and ſolid grounds; we muſt charge ourſelves with theſe things; and put ourſelves into a capacity of diſcerning the difference of things, and form ourſelves according to that judgment.

DISCOURSE X.

The MALIGNITY of POPERY.

JAMES iii. 18.

The fruit of righteouſneſs is ſown in peace of them that make peace.

I Have propoſed to make uſe of theſe words as a character, a *criterion*, a note or mark of difference and diſtinction: and that not only of perſons in their ſingle capacities, but chiefly of *churches*. For we find the great enquiry of chriſtendom is, *Which is the true church?* The *Romiſh* they pretend that they are it: and they will tell us, that there is no other; and that there is no ſalvation out of their *church*. A very great aſſuming, and taking upon them-

themſelves. I would not run into other arguments, but let us judge by this temper recommended in the text, *which is likely to be the true church.* If they do make uſe of the name and credit of religion for inhuman and cruel practices, then this character doth not belong to them. Let us try by that: and,

In the firſt place they own it, that they may propagate religion with fire and ſword: and by woful experience it hath been found, that that which hath been done under that title of extirpating heretical pravity, of which they take to themſelves the cogniſance and judgment, hath proved the moſt fiery and incendiary principle that ever was in the world. Farther, they do not account themſelves bound to keep faith and truth with hereticks. They ſay, that by hereſies, men loſe all their right to truth; whereas we know that keeping our word is the foundation of all converſe: for what is one man to another, more than his word? If men be not true to their word and promiſe, by which men are ſure of perſons and things, all converſe is to little purpoſe, if not for the worſe.

Farther, they *ſanctify*, by their notion of religion, treachery, falſhood and perfidiouſneſs, murder, maſſacre, bloody and cruel practices; and all this, to extirpate hereſy, (as they call it) to plant religion, and bring men into their church. But how this agrees with the character given of religion in the text, and the intent and purpoſe of it, let any man judge. Verily, by what theſe men ſay and do, one would think that hell itſelf were broken looſe, and come up into the world. So unlike it is to *new*

Jeruſalem that ſhall come down from above. Yet this is that religion which they practiſe, and which they own in their principles. And becauſe I am upon a material point, I will give you a few *inſtances* by which it will appear, that what I have ſaid is true. *Henry* the third king of *France* was baſely murdered by *Clement*. *Henry* the fourth by *Ravillac*. And ſee how theſe practiſes took among them. Pope *Pius* the fifth that was then alive, applauded the fact of *Clement*, and reckons it as glorious a work as God's ſending the Meſſiah into the world, or raiſing him from the dead: that a religious perſon ſhould do ſuch an act, for the intereſt, ſervice, and advantage of the church: becauſe it was done in the defence of the holy league, which was indeed nothing but rebellion and irreligion.

John Huſs, and *Jerom of Prague* were burnt for hereticks, notwithſtanding the *ſafe conduct* that was promiſed them. But they did all agree, that the emperor could not give *ſafe conduct* to ſuch hereticks, and that no faith ought to be kept with them. In this caſe, we may uſe the words of good old *Jacob*, Gen. xlix. 6. *Simeon and Levi are brethren, inſtruments of cruelty are in their habitation. O my ſoul, come not thou into their ſecret, unto their aſſembly, mine honour be not thou united. Curſed be their anger, for it was fierce, and their wrath, for it was cruel*, &c. In matters of good and evil, men ought to be governed by the reaſon of things, or by plain and expreſs texts of ſcripture. But theſe men do teach us, as *Gideon* was ſaid to teach the men of *Succoth*, Judg. viii. 16. *With thorns and briars of the wilderneſs, with*

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theſe he taught the men of Succoth. Or as *Joab* did, 2 *Sam.* xii. 31. *He brought forth the people that were taken, and put them under ſaws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and made them paſs through the brick-kiln,* &c. Theſe are the men that fulfil what is written by the author to the *Hebrews*, chap. xi. of men of their ſpirit and temper, that uſed thoſe men, of whom the world was not worthy, after this manner: *ſome were ſtoned, others were ſawn aſunder, were tempted, were ſlain with the ſword, and made to wander about in ſheep-ſkins and goat-ſkins, being deſtitute, afflicted, tormented.* Theſe men of whom the world was not worthy, *had trial of cruel mocking and ſcourgings yea of bonds and impriſonments.* All theſe things are verified of thoſe, that have been perſecuted by the *roman church*: the *Albigenſes* and the *Waldenſes*; of whom multitudes were murdered for their conſciences toward God.

I might alſo inſtance in their manner of converting the *Indians* and natives: and tell you ſuch lamentable ſtories, that would even pierce the heart of any man to hear them. But to come near home, their maſſacre of *Paris*, accompanied with ſuch cruelty and barbarity, as words can hardly expreſs. Never was it known in the world, that men ſhould all on a ſudden, riſe up againſt their neighbours among whom they lived in peace; and without any provocation, or wrong *done* to them, to riſe up and deſtroy ſo many thouſands, upon *the ſcore* of religion and conſcience, as they did here, and in *Ireland*. The relation of both which is extant.

But laſtly, their deſign all along and continued practice among us, in the days of *Queen Mary* and *Elizabeth*. In the former of whoſe reign, who is ignorant of the havock they made upon good and innocent men, haling them not only to priſons, but to the ſtake, becauſe they could not worſhip a piece of bread, for God? And what they are now a doing God only knows; though in ſome meaſure their intentions have been diſcovered by their actions. Alas! what have theſe men to do with our faith in God? Is it any wrong to them, that we have faith in God according as we find cauſe to believe? Is it not enough that we do approve our conſciences to God, and to receive from God what he hath ſpoken? Is all this to no purpoſe, unleſs we will comply with their novel creeds, none of which were known in the days of the apoſtles, nor for ſeveral hundreds of years after? I ſay, what juſt cauſe of provocation do the reformed religion give to theſe popiſh ſpirits: that becauſe proteſtants cannot believe as the popiſh church doth, but are guided by reaſon and ſcripture, the moſt ſacred things in the world; the one being the light of God's creation and the other the revelation and reſult of his will. Becauſe we cannot practice contrary to theſe, nor otherwiſe than our judgments and conſciences allow of; therefore are we uſed, as they in *Daniel* by *Nebuchadnezzar*, thrown into the fiery furnace, and perſecuted with plunders, maſſacres, and what the malice of theſe men can invent. Is this any religious motion think you? which always ought to be in obedience to God, and according to knowledge.

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If this be a heavy charge, I appeal to thoſe that know them beſt, whether I charge them with any thing that is not apparently true.

But let us for a while, reaſon with theſe men, concerning theſe principles and practices: and I aſk them ſoberly, is *this* like the religion of him that came to ſeek and ſave that which was loſt, and that prayed for his murderers, *Father, forgive them, they know not what they do?* And St. *Stephen*, the firſt martyr, he wrote after his copy; *Lord, lay not this ſin to their charge.* Is this the religion of him who *rebuked* his diſciples for calling for fire from heaven, to deſtroy them that did not follow them? They did not think of making a fire to do it, but they flew to heaven for vengeance; it muſt be fire from thence, and not of their kindling. And then, what was the cauſe? It was for an affront put upon our Saviour himſelf, which, if any thing, would have juſtified them: but our Saviour rebukes them, and tells them, that they knew not what ſpirits they were of; and expreſly declares to them, that his coming into the world, was to ſave mens lives, and not to deſtroy them: and they which carry on our Saviour's work, and are acted by a goſpel ſpirit, they do the like. Was this ſpirit of popery learnt of the bleſſed Jeſus, that was meek and lowly in heart, and bid us learn of him to be ſuch? Is it not rather the ſpirit and work of him that goeth about like a roaring lion, ſeeking whom he may devour? This indeed, is like the work of him that was a murderer from the beginning. Is this the fruit of that religion that allows no evil in any caſe what-

ſoever? that requires patient bearing of wrongs, and doing good for evil? that if our enemy hunger, requires us to feed him, and if he thirſt, to give him drink, and to win and overcome by gentleneſs, and heaping coals of fire upon our enemy's head; and doing, as God himſelf, who cauſeth his ſun to ſhine on the evil and the good, and ſendeth rain on the juſt and the unjuſt, and that is kind to the unthankful and to the evil? Are theſe the fruits of the Spirit which are ſo famouſly deſcribed *Gal.* v 22. and *Col.* iii. 12. *Love, joy, peace, long-ſuffering, patience*, &c. places that I have had ſo often occaſion to mention in theſe diſcourſes? And then the apoſtle chargeth us to *forgive* one another, even as God for Chriſt's ſake hath forgiven us: and this was the life of our Saviour. *He went about, doing good, healing the ſick*, comforting the diſconſolate, and inſtructing the ignorant, and reclaiming the diſobedient, and bringing them to the wiſdom of the juſt. This was the work and buſineſs of our bleſſed Saviour, all the time he lived in the world, and this is that which he expects from his followers. So that I may truly ſay, chriſtianity is the beſt principle of kindneſs that ever came into the world: but oft it cometh to paſs, that the corruption of the beſt proves the worſt. And this I have obſerved, that where modeſty and loving affection, are the natural dowry; there in the degenerate ſtate is the greateſt impudence and cruelty. It hath been long obſerved, that faction and miſtaken zeal, are a kind of *wild-fire*. The more falſe any one is in his religion, the more fierce and furious: the more miſtaken,

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the more impoſing. The more any man's religion is his *own*, the more he is concerned for it, but cool and indifferent enough for that which is God's.

I will give you a few *inſtances* to ſhew you the truth of this: that the more falſe any man's religion is, the more furious he will be in maintaining it, *Acts* xxiii. 12. We read of ſome men, that out of their great zeal for the moſaical law, banded together and bound themſelves with an oath, that they would neither eat nor drink, till they had killed *Paul*. And 1 *Kings* xviii. we read of *Baal*'s prieſts, how that they cut themſelves after their manner, with knives and lances, till the blood guſhed out upon them, and cryed from morning to evening, *O Baal, hear us*, &c.

In like manner, we read of the worſhippers of *Diana*, *Acts* xix. that they were full of wrath and confuſion, crying out, *Great is Diana of the Epheſians*. Alſo, we read of *Balaam*, the falſe prophet, *Numb.* xxiii. how he built altars, and offered ſacrifice from one place to another, thinking by theſe to bribe God; and at laſt, built ſeven altars, and prepared ſeven bullocks and ſeven rams, hoping, by theſe to effect his deſign: ſo likewiſe we read of thoſe that burnt incenſe to the *queen of heaven*, Jer. xliv. 17. They confeſs this practice of burning incenſe to the queen of heaven, and ſerving other gods, whom neither they, nor their fathers had known: and theſe furious *zealots* do ſuch things in purſuit of their devotion, that the reaſon of mankind condemned. They *made a religion* to themſelves, and then did ſuch things in purſuance of

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their wild and bloody devotion, as the very reaſon of mankind ſtartled at; as you may ſee, *Jer.* xxxii. 35. *They made their ſons and their daughters to paſs through the fire unto Molech*; a thing which God commanded them not, neither came it into his mind, *Ezek.* viii. 13, 14. You read of ſeveral abominations committed by the children of *Iſrael*, which were repreſented to the prophet, in the dark. Theſe men even ſpoiled the good nature they were born with, by cruel practice, and they became the worſe for their religion.

I do conclude, that far better is *nature alone*, take it as it is, than that religion which is inſincere and falſe. I ſay it again, better nature alone, though debaſed, abuſed and neglected, the very refuſe of God's creation, than *that* religion, which is falſe and inſincere. For, *Ariſtotle*, who is credible in matters of nature and reaſon, he hath obſerved, that man, by his nature and conſtitution, is a mild and gentle creature, fitted for converſe, and delighting in it. Certainly, were I to take an eſtimate of chriſtianity, either from popery, or any of the groſs ſuperſtitions of the world, and the affected modes of perſons, I would return to philoſophy again, and let chriſtianity alone. For philoſophy, ſo far as it goes, is ſincere and true, and attains good effects: it mollifies mens ſpirits, and rids them of all barbarity. True indeed, it is ſhort of ſupernatural revelation, and theſe things the princes of the world did not know; (as we read, 1 *Cor.* ii. 14.) becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned, that is, (according to the ſenſe of the text) they are known only by revelation

lation from God. For he there doth give an account, that as *no man knows the things of a man, but the ſpirit of a man which is in him; ſo no man knows the things of God, but the Spirit of God:* that is, the reſults of the divine will are not known, unleſs they be revealed by the Spirit of God. This is the true meaning of this text; and it is ill brought, to prove that a man in the uſe of reaſon and natural light, cannot underſtand ought that belongs to his ſalvation, or the ſenſe of any text of ſcripture. I am very confident, the apoſtle never ſays, nor means any ſuch thing. But as the ſecrets of a man are known only to the man himſelf, till he doth reveal them; ſo the ſecrets of God are known only to God, till God reveal them, and till then we are not charged with them; for negative infidelity damns no man. But thoſe that are acted by the ſpirit of popery, do corrupt the word of God, as the apoſtle ſays, 2 *Cor.* ii. 17. They make the word of God to ſerve ends and purpoſes, as the apoſtle ſaith, 2 *Pet.* ii. 3. They make merchandiſe of the word of God, and make gain their godlineſs: that is, they gain power and wealth, and live in pomp; theſe are the ingredients that make up their religion. But ſince they do uſurp upon us, we will put in theſe few material exceptions againſt them, and will ſhew wherein the popiſh and reformed church differ.

Firſt, They impoſe upon our belief, things contrary to reaſon; ſelf-inconſiſtent and incongruous.

Secondly, What of truth they acknowledge, they make void and elude, by qualifications, explications, limitations and diſtinctions.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, They ſuperadd to religion, things unlikely to be true, diſhonourable to human nature, and without all warrant from God.

Fourthly, and laſtly, they fruſtrate the effects of real religion, by their pretence of power and privilege.

Firſt, They confound the reaſon of our minds, by abſurdities, incongruities, and impoſing upon our belief things impoſſible and inconſiſtent. Theſe are ſtrange things to be ſaid of any religion: yet I will make it evidently to appear, and go no farther than the *monſtrous* doctrine of *tranſubſtantiation*, which if we do admit, we muſt bid farewel to all our natural ſentiments. Reaſon muſt then be laid aſide, and ſhall be no judge hereafter. We muſt then give the lie to the report of our ſenſes. And if we do this, how ſhall we think that God made our faculties true? But if God did not make my faculties true, I am abſolutely diſcharged from all duty to God, and regard to his commands, becauſe I have no faculty that can reſolve me that this is of God. Now if I may not believe the reaſon of my mind, in conjunction with three or four of my ſenſes, how ſhall I know any thing to be this or that? And if I do not know any thing to be true or good, I am not obliged, as to practice. And if God do require duty of me, he uſeth power againſt right, and calls me to give an account, when it was not poſſible for me to know his mind in any thing. Therefore, I ſay, *tranſubſtantiation* doth confound the reaſon of our mind, by abſurdities, and impoſing upon our beliefs, things that are impoſſible, and repugnant to our ſenſes.

Secondly,

Secondly, They make void, what they themſeves cknowledge to be true, by diſtinctions, evaſions, li-ıitations, gloſſes, comments, explications. And to ıake this out, I will inſtance in ſix things.

1*ſt*. Their doctrine of *probability*. If a man can nd any doctor among them that held ſuch an opi-ion, it makes that doctrine probable.

2*dly*. The point of *mental reſervation*. You can-ot know their minds by what they ſay, becauſe ou do not know what they reſerve in their minds. o that what they ſay may be but half what they ıean.

3*dly*. The trick of *directing the intention*. By this ıey may murder a man, ſo they do not intend to ıurder him, but to rid themſelves of an enemy. They may declare that which is falſe, and deny ıat which is true, becauſe they intend the credit of ıeir church and religion: and this intention ſhall xcuſe them from downright falſhood.

4*thly*. The practice of *equivocation* is too well nown among them.

5*thly*. Their way of evaſion, by having a *double nſe*. Whereas, no man ought to uſe wit or parts) impoſe upon another, or to make a man believe ıat which they do not mean. In treating, one ·ith another, we ought to take care that there be ight underſtanding between both parties, and ıat each do underſtand one another's meaning; nd in caſe there be a miſtake herein, we ought to :leaſe one another; for the agreement is only in ·hat we meant and intended, not in that wherein ıey did not conſent and agree.

6*thly*.

6*thly*. Their ſhift of hypocritical *prolocution*; that is, to uſe words of ſuch a ſound, when they do not intend ſuch a thing by them, as a man would think they did. Now, all theſe are contrary to the ſimplicity and plain-heartedneſs that ought to be in our converſe, one with another. I will not farther explain theſe things, becauſe they are abominable; and I would not teach any man to be diſhoneſt. For they are of ſuch a nature, that if you ſpeak them, you teach them; and if you declare them, men may learn them. But

Thirdly, They ſuperadd things unlike to be true, and diſhonourable to God; and this I will make appear in three things.

1*ſt*. Their uſe of *images* in the worſhip of God. How far better than this, is that which we find among the philoſophers? God, ſay they, is to be worſhipped by purity of mind; becauſe a ſpirit is beſt acknowledged by the reaſon of man's underſtanding, and the thought of his heart: for this is the worſhip moſt ſuitable to an immaterial being; and it is the uſe of that in us, which is the higheſt and nobleſt of our faculties. For the ſpirit in man is the *candle of the Lord*, lighted by God, and a light to direct us unto him, as we read, *Acts* xvii. 27.

2*dly*. The veneration of *relicks*; a very vain thing: for there can be no certainty at this diſtance of time, what they are; and if they were what they are taken for to be, what is due to them? for, inanimate things are far inferior to thoſe that have life; and we read, that the leſs is bleſſed of the

greater,

greater, *Heb.* vii. 7. And *Solomon* ſaith, *Eccl.* ix. 9. That a living dog is better than a dead lion. And for the living to worſhip things that are dead, is altogether irrational and unaccountable. And for the worſhipping of *angels* and fellow creatures, which is the

3d. Thing, why ſhould ſhould any man ſo proſtitute himſelf as to worſhip theſe? I am ſure God would not have us do ſo: he would not have us adore any creature. For as the apoſtle reaſons, *Col.* ii. 18. it is but a ſhew of humility to worſhip angels, and they are in the higheſt rank of creatures. And if they are not to be worſhipped (as it is plain from *Rev.* xxii. 9. they are not) then ſurely none below them. And God hath declared, that there is but one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Chriſt Jeſus.'

Fourthly, They fruſtrate the effect of real religion by their pretence to power and privilege. That is, they pretend to make that lawful which is not lawful. *Bellarmine* ſaith, that the pope may declare virtue to be vice, and vice virtue. By this practice they can turn *attrition* into *contrition*, that is, they can make ſuch a conſternation of mind, as fell upon *Judas*, when he went and hanged himſelf, by the prieſt's abſolution to be *contrition*; that is change it into the notion of true repentance. And alſo bodily penance inſtead of an inward change of the mind. They pretend to work ſpiritual effects by virtue of holy water and the croſs. They pretend the efficacy of indulgences, for the pardon of ſin: the power of abſolving men from oaths and obligations: all which are things unaccountable. There

are

are three great deſigns in popery, and I will tell you what they are.

1*ſt*. To keep the civil *magiſtrate* in awe.

2*dly*. To maintain the *clergy* in ſtate and honour.

3*dly*. To keep the *people* in ignorance, and ſo to enſlave them, and diſable them to ſee or know. Theſe are three great things in popery. If any of you deſire any of theſe three things, popery is for your turn; but if you would maintain the honour and privilege of human nature, then you muſt give your teſtimony againſt it.

But in true religion there is nothing which the reaſon of mankind can challenge or object againſt: nothing wherein the reaſon of mankind may not have ſo good an account, ſo as to have ſatisfaction.

And to declare the plain truth. I do not at all underſtand that there is any religion farther than *that* which is owned among proteſtants. What they have more among the papiſts is accommodated to ſerve ends and purpoſes. The moſt learned among the church of *Rome* acknowledge the materials of our religion to be true. As for the ignorant, they are of no conſideration in point of judgment; no more than the opinion of a blind man in point of colours, or of a deaf man as to ſounds.

I conclude this with what a great *abbot* in their church was wont to ſay, that he did greatly ſuſpect that his religion muſt needs fail, becauſe there was ſo little ground for it in the word of God. I will add to what he ſaid, that there is as little ground for it in the principles of God's creation, or in that which we call natural religion.

Now

Now I come to give you an account of the *reformed church*. And I will ſay concerning it, that it doth neither perſecute, nor hold any principle of diſturbance, but maintain principles of peace. If any man in the reformed church do, I muſt declare, that it is the fault of particular parties, and not to be charged upon the reformed church. And to make this appear, I will begin with what the church of *England* declares: and I had beſt for that quote ſome of the *homilies*, of which there is one concerning contention and ſtrife, and particularly that which is occaſioned by principles of religion. The words are theſe, "It is far better and more worthy "for any one to give place to another, and let his "argument fall, than to win the *victory* with breach "of *charity*." An excellent determination, which you ſhall find in the homily againſt ſtrife and contention. Then for the *ancients*, I will quote you two or three ſayings of theirs.

'Tis, ſaith one, unnatural to religion to be forced; for a man's religion muſt be choſen. St. *Auſtin* gives his account of the *Circumcellions*, the worſt ſort of *Donatiſts*. Saith he, "We bring theſe be-"fore the civil magiſtrate, not becauſe they err in "matters of faith, but becauſe they perſecute and "are troubleſome to right believers" * they brought

* *Non eſſe petendum ab imperatoribus, ut ipſam hereſim juberent omnino non eſſe pœnam conſtituendo eis qui in illa eſſe voluiſſent: ſed hoc potius conſtituerunt, ut eorum furioſas violentias non paterentur qui veritatem catholicam vel prædicarent loquendo, vel legerent conſtituendo.* Aug. *ep.* 50. *vid. & ep.* 68, 159.

the

them before the magiſtrate, to reſtrain their violence not to compel them to believe. Thus St. *Auſtin*. And indeed there needs nothing to promote religion but gentle and friendly ways. For in point of *natural religion* (which takes in ſobriety, righteouſneſs, and piety) you may eaſily ſatisfy any man by reaſon. For no man is in any thing more certain, than that he ought to be ſober and temperate; than that he ought to deal righteouſly, and ſo as he would be dealt by; and that he ought to carry himſelf equally and fairly; and that he ought to fear and reverence the deity: for theſe are the dictates of natural light. And therefore if we will *ſhew ourſelves* to be *men*, we muſt live in the practice of theſe principles, and comply with them. And then for other matters, matters of *revealed religion* and truth; in theſe, we are perſuaded by the word of God; by the reaſon of the things themſelves in matters of the former ſort; and by the revelation of God's word, in the latter. And if the ſpirit of God doth not ſatisfy, and perſuade the mind of a man to receive and entertain theſe, as they are here declared; then there is no poſſibility of making this man to become a *chriſtian*. For you cannot force chriſtianity, becauſe it is matter of ſupernatural revelation: here you cannot convince men by reaſon, which is the only way to deal with men in other matters. And ſo the apoſtle hath told us: becauſe theſe are the reſults of God's will, therefore it follows that they are only knowable by God's revelation of them to us, 1 Cor. ii. 11. *As no man knows the things of a man, but the ſpirit of a man which is in him, ſo no man knows*

knows the things of God but the ſpirit of God, and he to whom the ſpirit will reveal them.

Now I will give you an account of the main principles of the *reformed religion*; what it doth maintain, allow, defend and practiſe: and lay it out in eight particulars.

1. The reformed religion doth allow and maintain the worſhip of God, and all the offices in religion, to be performed in the *vulgar tongue*: ſo that knowledge and devotion may be had and promoted.

2. The reformed religion doth own the *free uſe of ſcripture*, both in publick and private; and call upon men to do as our Saviour adviſeth, *viz.* to *ſearch the ſcriptures*, for by them we hope to find eternal life; for theſe are they which make the man of God perfect, and richly furniſh him for every good work; and by theſe we are able to render a reaſon of the hope that is in us.

3. The reformed church doth hold that the ſcripture is the *only rule* of faith: and therefore traditions councils and fathers, and the writings of learned men, are only to be uſed as helps, better to underſtand the ſcripture: but they are *not* to be looked upon as any rule of faith; but in this caſe we ſay as the apoſtle, *if I, or an angel from heaven preach any other doctrine than that which we have delivered unto you, let him be accurſed.* It is well reſolved by St. *Auſtin*, who ſaith if any one of us offer that which is not in ſcripture, any man that hears, hath more authority to refuſe, than the other hath to declare. But in popery we find *twelve new articles* at once impoſed upon us.

4. We of the proteſtant religion do aſſert, that every one hath the right of his *private judgment*. But we do adviſe, that to the end men may be able to diſtinguiſh between good and evil, truth and falſhood; they make themſelves capable of this right by prayer and meditation, and diligent ſearch, and conference, and other helps of knowledge. Adviſing men to be modeſt, humble, ſober and temperate and to lay aſide all fondneſs and partiality of ſerving ends, when they come to read the ſcripture: ſaying as *Auſtin* once did, when you take up the bible to read, you muſt not ſeek there for an argument to confirm your opinion, but reſolve to entertain that opinion which the text doth direct and warrant. Now the *Romaniſts* tell us of what great acquiſition they have made, how many they have brought to their church, by their way of force and violence: and particularly they brag of what they have done in the *Indies*. For which I ſhall quote you the teſtimony of a great *abbot*, that was then a biſhop among them: his words are theſe, "Who after a "brutiſh manner drive people to *baptiſm*, as men "drive beaſts to watering, and butcher far more "than they baptize."

5. We do declare, that the *teachers* of the church ought *not* to be *dictators*, or maſters of mens faith; but helpers of mens faith; for they are *not to make religion, but to ſhew it*. They do not take away the key of knowledge from the people, as our Saviour chargeth the *Phariſees*, Luke xi. 52. Or as St. *Auſtin* ſaith, they do not command faith in men, upon peril of damnation, to ſhew their ſuperiority, or to practiſe

practiſe as governors: but they do appear in the good office of direction, and giving men counſel. 'Tis not pride of ruling and ſhewing power, but out of compaſſion to lead people into the way of truth, and to recover them out of error and miſtake.

6. We tell people that the *ſcripture* is clear, and full, and *perſpicuous* in all things neceſſary, as to all matters of life and practice. So that if people be well minded, and uſe diligence, they may eaſily underſtand, and be ſatisfied. We never teach them to reſign up themſelves to others, nor to believe as others do blindfold, to believe as the church believes. 'Tis true, to give you a little account of this, there are in the *bible*, things of a very different nature.

1. There are matters of *ancient records*, the hiſtory of former times; and theſe things were far better known then, than they are now, at this diſtance of time.

2. There are in the ſcripture things that are wholly expired, and *out of date*, and ſo of leſs uſe to us, as the whole moſaical diſpenſation.

3. There are in ſcripture matters of *prophecy*, fitted for thoſe times; which they did far better underſtand, than we do now: and wherein they were far more concerned than we are. For they are tranſactions partly of things performed, which when fulfilled were beſt underſtood.

4. And there are matters of deep *philoſophy*, as alſo matters of *philology*; and theſe do not belong to the buſineſs of religion.

5. And laſtly, there is the *moral part* of religion; and our Saviour's doctrine; and in theſe two our

religion conſiſts: and theſe are eaſily learnt and underſtood. I ſay, the moral part of religion, and the doctrine of our Saviour, which are eaſy to be underſtood. And for the other parts of ſcripture, they are not of ſuch concern to the community of mankind. And if we do not fully underſtand them, we are ſafe enough; if ſo be we are brought to real goodneſs and virtue, and to believe in God through Jeſus Chriſt.

7. The reformed church doth not deceive men by any ways of *fraud* and *falſhood*. Thoſe of the *Romiſh* church, that hold the doctrine of *implicit faith* and the doctrine of merit, and teach that *maſſes* ought to be ſaid to relieve ſouls in *purgatory*: theſe impoſtures and cheats we put upon none. Indeed we do allow implicit faith in *God*, where we cannot certainly underſtand what his meaning is, in any particular text. That is, we do believe that what the divine ſpirit meant by theſe words is true; and when it doth appear unto us, we will receive and admit it. And this faith we allow.

But an implicit faith in men, or in the *church*, this is *popery*. We deal honeſtly with men; for we plainly declare to men, that without perſonal holineſs, they cannot ſee the face of God: according as the apoſtle ſaith, *Heb.* xii. 14. and *Eph.* iv. 24. *That we muſt be renewed in the ſpirit of our minds.* This we declare and inculcate, and admoniſh men about the effects of regeneration, and the motion of true godly repentance and turning from ſin to God. As alſo put men in mind, upon all occaſions, that this is a probation ſtate, and that men are here to

be

tted and qualified for the ſtate of glory and im
ality. And that men ought to lead chriſtian
, and not refer themſelves to a death-bed repen
e, which is very hazardous and uncertain : for
can men get knowledge all in a moment ? Is
ime of ſickneſs a time for men to learn ? when
ſhould come to practiſe, is that a time to be
ht ? when men are put upon the very laſt nick
ing. Or to get themſelves releaſed from long
naughty habits all on a ſudden ; and the facul-
releaſed from ſuch inclinations ; when as the
het tells us, that it is next to waſhing the black-
r white, for men that have been accuſtomed to
vil, to do well. So that we deal honeſtly and
htly with men, telling them, as they expect to
appy hereafter, in this ſtate to acquaint them-
s with neceſſary knowledge, and to get them-
s diſcharged from all naughty habits, which
not be eaſy to do upon a ſick-bed ; eſpecially
n have long abuſed themſelves, through ill
cuſtom, and practice.

We do reſolve, that all they who do agree in
nain points of religion, may look upon them-
s as members of the ſame church, notwithſtand-
ny different apprehenſions in other matters.
this is a principle of peace and charity ; and
nowledge tends to the reconciliation of men,
o make them live together like chriſtians, in
and good will. And for this I will quote you
ying of the apoſtle, *Phil.* iii. 15. *Let us there-
as many as be perfect, be thus minded ; and if in
hing ye be otherwiſe minded, God ſhall reveal even
nto you.*

I will *conclude* all with that ſaying of a great ſchool-man, who ſpake indifferently of the ſtate of the reformed and *Romiſh* church. "For men to differ "about matters of particular perſuaſion and opini- "on it is not inconſiſtent with that imperfect ſtate "which we are in, while in the way to heaven; "when we come thither, we ſhall be conſummat- "ed, and more fully harmonize: but to differ in o- "pinion, is not repugnant to peace in the way; "though the difference ſhall be taken away when "we come home."

Now if it be otherwiſe with any man that owns the reformed religion; I muſt tell you that though he may profeſs he is of the reformed religion, he is *Popiſh* in the proteſtant profeſſion. For theſe are matters wherein they of the proteſtant religion do agree: and if any man queſtion any of thoſe, he is ſo far popiſh in the proteſtant profeſſion.

DISCOURSE XI.

The Deceitfulneſs of SIN.

HEB. iii. 13.

Take heed, leſt any of you be hardned through the deceitfulneſs of ſin.

WE are in this world in a ſtate of probation, and have many enemies to encounter with ſo that our condition is very dangerous, both *from force* and *fraud*, and from *fraud* the worſt of the two

two. For if a man be ill dealt withal, and forced, he is excuſed becauſe he could not help it; but if any man ſuffer from *fraud*, he is both laughed at, and ſelf-condemned. Now, he is couzened and cheated, that upon any repreſentation made to him of things without, either doth or permits what is in itſelf ſinful or unlawful. And by *this rule* you may eſtimate all that I have to ſay.

I ſhall,

I. Give you an account of the *deceitfulneſs of ſin*. And,

II. Shew you the great *reaſon* we have to *take heed*, that we be not deceived.

I. My buſineſs ſhall be to ſhew you the *deceitfulneſs* of ſin, and how much thereby we are in danger. And this I will do in ten particulars.

1. Evil takes *another name*, though it doth always retain its nature; and becauſe it muſt not be known by its own name, it doth adopt itſelf into the family of ſome of the virtues, as if it were like to ſome of them: and things that are alike do oft impoſe upon unwary perſons. Now becauſe a particular rule is beſt known by *inſtances*, I will mention ſeveral. Covetouſneſs paſſeth for a thrifty temper, and good husbandry; prodigality for being generous; vanity is reputed neceſſary remiſſion of mind, and fooliſh talking to be affable converſation; laviſh expence of time, goes for exerciſe and recreation due to the body; finding fault with others, is reckoned to be reproof of ſin; ſharpneſs and ſeverity, to be ſtrict-

neſs

neſs of conſcience; backbiting is accounted an endeavour for reformation; jealouſy and ſuſpicion to be care for right and truth; buſy meddling with other mens affairs, lives, and judgments, is ſaid to be activity for the advancement of religion; and to controul others liberty, a care for their ſouls; preſumption is thought to be faith in God; curious determinations beyond ſcripture, to be the improvement of faith; and inconſiderate dulneſs to be the denial of our reaſon; mal-content to be ſorrow for ſin; exceſſive uſe of the creatures, to be chriſtian liberty; compliance beyond meaſure to be good fellowſhip; fond imaginations to be divine inſpiration; extravagancies of paſſion, to be the unavoidable motion of a cholerick temper; taking too much upon one's ſelf, and over-bearing the company in diſcourſe and converſe, to be better improvements of the talent; fierceneſs in a ſect, in a particular way or mode, to be a greater care of religion; ſpeaking without ſenſe, to be the ſimplicity of the ſpirit; ſheepiſhneſs to be modeſty; diffidence to be humility; affording hard meaſure, to be ſtanding for one's right; petulancy and animoſity, to be generouſneſs, courage, good mettle, and like a man of ſpirit; cunning craftineſs, to be prudence and policy; neglect and careleſs omiſſions, to be infirmities only, the weakneſſes of the ſaints.

Thus there are many things which paſs for a due temper, and regular motion in religion, which are not the perfections they are taken for, but rather the contrary. I cannot now ſtand to convince theſe ſeverally of deceit; but if they be enquired into,

into, they will not be found to be the things they pretend to be.

The 2d and 3d I will put together. Sometimes evil ſuggeſteth to us *pleaſure and delight*, and ſometimes *gain and profit*. And theſe two, pleaſure and profit, are the baits that take with all men that are not of fixed and reſolved virtue. Now the ſcripture ſuppoſeth both of theſe; and therefore we read of the *pleaſures of ſin*, that they are but for a ſeaſon. And alſo it telleth us of the *wages of unrighteouſneſs*. But ſolid and true pleaſure, gain and ſatisfaction to a mind well inſtructed, is only to be found in the ways of virtue and goodneſs. For *Solomon* tells us, that *the ways of wiſdom are pleaſant*: and *godlineſs is great gain*, ſaith the apoſtle.

4. Evil holds us in hand that it is a matter of our *right*, and that which we may do in the uſe of our *liberty*; whereas 'tis not power, to be able to do that which is not fit to be done: this is not liberty, but licentiouſneſs, wantonneſs, to do evil, or to ſerve any luſt. But we are greatly bent to maintain our right, and ſhew our power. *Jezebel*, ſpake thus to *Ahab*, when he was troubled for *Naboth*'s vineyard: *doſt thou govern Iſrael, and knoweſt not how to have Naboth's vineyard? ariſe, eat bread, and let thine heart be merry: I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.* And ſhe gave it him, but upon ſtrange terms; by wilful murder, perjury, and ſubornation thus did ſhe uſe her power, 1 *Kings* xxi.

5. Evil covers itſelf with ſome *probable notion*, or circumſtance. Nothing in this vain world is more uſual than colours, pretences, repreſentations, excuſe-

ſes, appearances contrary to reality and truth. *Joſeph's* brethren's ſelling him is covered with their *not having their hands upon him* Gen. xxxvii. 2. 7. *David's* murdering *Uriah*, by drawing him out on the forlorn, 2 *Sam.* xi. 15. His numbering the people by the priviledge of a prince, 2 *Sam.* xxiv. When was it known that evil walked abroad without a diſguiſe? a fair pretence for a foul action. The devil's hook is too well baited to be ſeen. The ſerpent propoſed to our *firſt parents* their being *like unto Gods.* Gen. iii. 5. *The lips of the ſtrange woman drop as the honey comb: and her mouth is ſmoother than oil*, Prov. v. 3. The worſhippers of the golden calf conſecrated a day unto the Lord, *Ex.* xxxii. *Balaam* is in ſhew for the obſervance of God, *Numb.* xxiii. 26. But he taught *Balak* to caſt a ſtumbling block before the children of *Iſrael*, Rev. ii. 14. *Saul* takes upon him to offer a burnt-offering contrary to the expreſs command of God. He ſaith, *the Philiſtines are upon me, and I have not made ſupplication unto the Lord*, 1. Sam. xiii. 12. And he ſpared *the fatteſt of the cattle* that he might offer them in *ſacrifice*, 1 Sam. xv. 15. *Corah*, *Dathan* and *Abiram* juſtified their rebellion againſt *Moſes* and *Aaron* with this pretence that they *took too much upon them: ſeeing that all the congregation was holy*, as well as themſelves; therefore why ſhould they *lift up themſelves above the congregation of the Lord*, Num. xvi. 3, 7. Here is a pretence of maintaining the juſt *liberty* of the congregation. So they that would take away the life of our bleſſed Saviour ſay it is *expedient* that one man ſhould die, and that the nation periſh not, *John* xi. 50.

6. Evil

6. Evil warrants itſelf ſometimes by the difference of *time* and *place*, ſometimes by meaſure and degree, ſometimes by *mode* and *manner*. Foraſmuch as that may be done at one *time* that may not be done at another; diſtinguiſh but of times, (they will ſay) and then they think they ſhall be able to juſtify themſelves. And then by *meaſure* and *degree* although it be one of the moſt difficult things in the world to aſſign mode and meaſure, yet man will ſay it may be done in another place, though not in this; and in this manner, though not in that, or after any faſhion, and to ſuch a meaſure and degree. The ſluggard was for a little ſleep, a little ſlumber, *&c.* till evil had taken hold of him, and got an advantage upon him. In many caſes it is very hard to fix the utmoſt bounds of good and evil, becauſe theſe part as day and night which are ſeparated by twilight; ſo that there is as dim day-light between both. It is a very nice point for a man to know how far he may go, and farther he may not.

7. Evil pleads ſometimes the *neceſſity* of the caſe, and that it is unavoidable. The *law of the time*, the *neceſſity of the caſe*, this anſwers all objections to the contrary. Though I muſt tell you, there is no neceſſity at all to do that which is evil: for the worſt that the world can do unto us, is not ſo bad, as to do evil. And we muſt rather expoſe to hazard the loſs of our lives, and all we have, than give God an offence. For it is better to die in reconciliation to God, than to live ten thouſand years in all the pleaſures and jollity of this world. This we find was *Herod*'s juſtification of himſelf, when he did

contrary

contrary to the very ſenſe of his own mind. He cut off *John Baptiſt's* head becauſe of his oath, and becauſe of thoſe that were with him at that time. But take this for a notion, *neceſſity* may put us upon inconveniencies, but neceſſity muſt never put us upon iniquity or make us conſent to evil. There is no neceſſity of ſin: for altho' we live no longer here, we ſhall live in a better ſtate. We muſt not ſave our lives, and deſtroy the cauſe of life. To live is to be in good temper of mind and regular in our actions and practice.

8. When evil hath once entangled us, there is another evil (and it may be a greater) thought neceſſary to hide, or *extenuate* it. For evil if it be lookt into, will be aſhamed of itſelf. Upon this account it is that men are aſhamed to own it, and ſometimes with a lie deny it. When *Cain* had murdered his brother, to the very face of God himſelf, he tells a lie. So *Annanias* and *Sapphira*, when they had ſold the poſſeſſion, and pretended that they brought all and laid it down at the apoſtle's feet, when as it was but a part. It had been an act of chriſtian *charity*, to have brought any part, ſo they had been ſincere and hearty in it: but they are ſaid to lie to the Holy Ghoſt. Seldom one evil goes alone. *Gehazi* did the firſt evil action in going after *Naaman* the *Syrian* and asking him for gold and change of raiment, without his maſter's commiſſion: but then this puts him upon another lie to juſtify it, and then more followed, as you may ſee in the ſtory.

9. Evil

9. Evil juſtifies itſelf by *preſcription* and *general practice*; ſo it was formerly, and ſo it is ſtill. And this is taken for a juſtification. This was the practice of thoſe *Iſraelites* that were not carried away captive, who diſſembled with the prophet and with God himſelf; who, tho' they enquired what they ſhould do, yet were reſolved to do as their *fathers* did before them; becauſe then, they ſaid, it was well with them, when they offered incenſe to the *queen of heaven*, and therefore they would do ſo again. Things that are in uſe and cuſtom, men think they may do; and what have been done before them. What, will they ſay, ſhall I be wiſer than my forefathers? This is the anſwer of many *Papiſts* among us, who will hear nothing that is ſaid to them, becauſe they will not damn thoſe that went before them, nor pretend to be wiſer than their anceſtors; others ſay, what! ſhall we call into queſtion common practice? do not thoſe that are wiſer and more learned than I, do the ſame things? nay, do not men of place and power do the ſame things? This is juſt like *Ahab* to *Micaiah*, 1 *Kings* xxii. Do not all the prophets ſpeak ſo and ſo? let thy word be like unto theirs. Not a word of what God ſhould ſay unto him, or what was *true* and *right*; but let thy word be like unto the reſt of the prophets. So it is with many men, they follow other mens practice, without conſidering what is *right* and *fit* to be done.

10. I ſhall obſerve in the laſt place, that which is moſt dangerous of all others, and that is this; when the firſt *motion* towards repentance and converſion

is

is lookt upon as if it were the ſovereign remedy of *repentance* itſelf. As if *ſorrow* for ſin, were the whole product of repentance; whereas indeed, that which is true repentance, muſt be accompanied with the forſaking of ſin and bringing forth the fruits of righteouſneſs. By which St. *John* means the reformation and amendment of our lives.

And that I may the better ſatisfy you in this, I deſire you to conſider, that the *firſt motions* of repentance have been, where nothing that was *good* followed upon it. We read that *Judas* was ſorry for his ſin, in betraying our Saviour; but what followed upon it? nothing but deſperation and ſelf-murder. *Cain* was ſenſible of the murder of his brother, and affected with the conſequence that he thought would follow upon it; for, ſaith he, every one that meets me will kill me: though this fear ſeemed very unreaſonable at that time. We read in the 2 *Pet.* ii. 18. of ſome that were *clean eſcaped* from the pollutions of the world, that were again entangled, whoſe laſt end was worſe than their beginning. And that it is better not to have known the way of righteouſneſs, than afterward to depart from the holy commandment. My *caution* therefore is, that if you look towards God, and your minds ſerve you to make any application to him; that you purſue that good motion till you bring it into a ſettled ſtate; for otherwiſe the firſt motion towards repentance may prove an aggravation of your ſin, and heavier condemnation.

Thus I have given you ten inſtances of the *deceitfulneſs of ſin*. And, as I told you at firſt, it will trouble

trouble us leſs to be over-born and forced, than to be cheated. For the former we may not be able to help; but we cannot be deceived, if we be but as wiſe as we ſhould, and ought to be. That one man is ſtronger and richer than another may not be in our power to help; but if a man be not as wiſe and virtuous as another, it may be much his own fault. For this depends upon his own due care, and the improvement of thoſe faculties that God hath given him. And I am of opinion, that *we ſhould all be wiſe enough one for another, if we were but equally honeſt.* The truth is, if any one be diſhoneſt, he may deceive a good man: for ſuch a man is given to charity, and apt to think of others as he finds himſelf, and ſo to have a good opinion. But if I am cheated a *ſecond time*, I am a fool. We read of perſons that lay under worldly diſadvantages that yet arrived to great wiſdom and underſtanding. The poor man by his wiſdom ſaved the city, *Eccleſ.* ix. 15. And we read of a wiſe woman that ſaved her husband, and a great many people. And poor *Lazarus* was wiſe for eternity. Therefore, as I ſaid, we may be over-born by power without any great diſparagement; but we cannot be cheated, but it muſt have an ill reflexion upon ourſelves. For no man makes a bargain unleſs he pleaſe, and he need not unleſs he will. If he want experience, why hath he not taken advice? So that, if he be cheated, it is owing to his weakneſs, willfulneſs, or raſhneſs; for he might have prevented it. No man is aſhamed that another is preferred before him in wealth and ability: but the meaneſt creature will

be

be impatient to be thought to want wit, or to be accounted a fool.

Having thus given an account of the *deceitfulneſs of ſin*; I will,

II. Shew you in ſome particulars, how great *reaſon* we have, according to the advice of the apoſtle to *take heed* that we are not deceived.

1. Becauſe in this ſtate we run all manner of *hazards* and *dangers*, to which God that hath a care of his creatures, doth yet ſuffer us to be expoſed; and that grace he affords us is not only for ornament, but for conflict. Some uſe the grace of God more, and ſome leſs; and others wholly neglect it. God did account, that we ſhould uſe and employ the faculties which he gave us; and 'tis unaccountable to God, if any man comes into human nature and doth not ſo uſe mind and underſtanding (that is capable of God, and receptive from God, and fit to make acknowledgments to him) I ſay, if he doth not uſe it for theſe purpoſes. For here we are to *fight the good fight of faith*, 1 Tim. vii. 12. *To run a race*, 1 Cor. ix. 24, 26. and *obtain a prize*. In the work of religion, much is here to be done, many temptations to be reſiſted, many conflicts to be made.

2. Our *ſeveral* faculties have different inclinations, and ſome of them are not at all capable of *reaſon*, therefore not to be governed by any moral conſiderations, which make it a very hard province that we are to act in. Many of our faculties are governed only by reſtraint, and are not held or drawn by the *cords of a man*: as for example, *appetite*;

petite; for which reaſon, *Solomon* ſaith, *Put a knife to thy throat, if thou beeſt a man given unto it.* For, reaſon will not ſatisfy an exorbitant appetite; and this creates to us great difficulty. This is the rule in all things, that a man act according to *reaſon*, which is the *candle of the Lord* ſet up in him; and by this he ſhould be directed, and ſee his way before him. For even the grace of God doth adjoin itſelf only to our higher principles. For this end it is given to guide and direct them; but for our lower faculties, they are otherwiſe to be dealt with: we muſt offer violence to them, if they be exorbitant.

3. Things without us, and round about us, preſented with their ſeveral advantages, do many times *provoke* and *allure* us; and are hardly to be denied. And a man hath nothing to withhold him, but the virtue of his mind, and reſpect to God. And abundance in the world are ſo profane, as to decry theſe principles, as things of fancy and imagination. Therefore it is neceſſary that we ſhould be ſettled in a *ſtate of virtue*, or we ſhall never, like *Joſeph*, be able to reſiſt evil, and to ſay, *How can I do this wickedneſs, and ſin againſt God?* Therefore ſaith *Solomon*, Prov. ii. 11. *Let underſtanding guide thee; let diſcretion keep thee.*

4. That which ſhould be for our ſecurity, *viz.* *company* and *converſe*: this oftentimes becomes a ſnare to us: though (as *Solomon* ſaith) two is better than one, becauſe if one fall, the other ſhall lift him up. And this was the deſign of God in making a *ſecond* to be an help unto the firſt; that ſo, that

which is finite, might be better ſecured by another; yet it often falls out that we are in great hazard by our very company and converſe. For company is of a bewitching, moulding and transforming nature: and therefore we ſhould take great heed of our company, and aſſociates. *Go not* (ſaith *Solomon*) *in the way of ſinners, avoid it, turn from it, and paſs away.* And *David* ſaith, *ſit not in the ſeat of the ſcornful.* And we have a rule, that *whoſoever is not known by himſelf, may be known by his company.* For converſe doth aſſimilate; and a man either finds his company ſuch as he is, or he will be like them. Eccluſ. xiii. 1. *For he that toucheth pitch that defileth, will be defiled; and he that goeth with vain perſons, ſhall be vain.*

5. He that is officious to bring us into his condemnation, he is forward to fit us with ſuitable objects that ſhall raiſe our apprehenſions, and draw us into evil. This he did to our firſt parents. *It is good for food, and deſirable to make one wiſe,* ſaid the ſerpent to *Eve.* And we read *Mat.* iv. 10. That *Satan* ſhewed to our Saviour all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, and ſaid, *Theſe will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worſhip me.* And we read, that he was a lying ſpirit in the mouths of four hundred falſe prophets at one time And that the *devil* is ſo buſy to ſeduce and draw men into evil, may appear to be the common ſenſe of *mankind,* by thoſe expreſſions we find in the *arraingment* of notorious malefactors, who are ſaid not to have the fear of God before their eyes, but to act by the inſtigation of the devil. As he that endeavours

vours to purify himſelf ſhall not want the divine aſſiſtance to encourage and aſſiſt him; ſo on the contrary he that neglects himſelf and conſents to known iniquity, ſhall not want thoſe that will drive him on; and as we ſay, *he muſt needs go, that the devil drives.* But then,

6. There are many things impure, and contrary to religion, to which we are tempted, that the world do not reckon among the greateſt crimes. There are other evils that are deſtructive to us, beſides *treaſon*, *murder*, and *theft*: and theſe we are to beware of, as well as thoſe that make us obnoxious to human laws; as I will give you ſome *inſtances*. It is a very great evil to make God a *mean*, and the world an *end*; to name God, and to intend the world; I dread to have to do with any man that will make uſe of his religion, to gain him credit, and to make a bargain: as alſo to be under the power of the world, and wholly at its beck or call; or to be under the power of ungoverned paſſions; to be vainly fraught and poſſeſs'd; to be out of the true uſe of reaſon, and ſelf-government. Theſe are inſtances of evils that are very deſtructive, though the world takes little notice of them, and do not reckon them in the number of mortal ſins. Yet if a man will ſecure his intereſt for eternity, he muſt take care to avoid theſe things. And herein is our great danger, becauſe men do not charge themſelves in theſe things, as in other crimes.

7. Man is ſuch a *compound*, that heaven and earth as it were meet in him, terms that are extremely diſtant. Man in reſpect of his mind, is qualified to converſe

with angels, and to attend upon God; and in reſpect of theſe noble faculties, he is liable to be tempted to inſolency, arrogancy, and great preſumption, and ſelf-exaltation. For it cannot be denied, but that in reſpect of his higheſt faculties, he is the *image of God*, which is his honour; being both intelligent and voluntary, having underſtanding, liberty, and freedom; which is his prerogative, above all other creatures below him. But yet in reſpect of theſe, he is tempted to lift up himſelf, and this was the fall of *Lucifer*; though there be no reaſon for it: for what is a ray that flows from the ſun, to the ſun itſelf? which the ſun could ſpare, without any diminution. Why ſhould any arbitrary and precarious being lift up itſelf, and leave God out? what an iniquity is this: for ſuch beings to act as independent, ſelf-ſufficient, never to acknowledge God as original, or referring to him as final, or reſting in him as the centre of his ſpirit! this is a high misbehaviour in an intelligent agent, far from duty, humility, or modeſty. Yet this he may be tempted unto, by reaſon of his height and excellency, in reſpect of his higher faculties. Now in reſpect of his *lower parts*, he is apt to ſink down into ſenſuality and brutiſhneſs: man in honour, and not underſtanding himſelf, is like the beaſts that periſh. From all which you may perceive, in how great danger man is, and what great need there is that he be not deceived.

8. I add; If we do not uſe ſelf-government, and moderate our powers, by ſubduing the inferior to the ſuperior, we fail in that which is our proper work

work and province, as we are inveſted with intellectual nature; and if we are led to gratify ſenſe againſt reaſon, we are cheated and couzened. We render thoſe words of the apoſtle, *Rom.* xiii. 14. to make *proviſion for the fleſh*: but the *Greek* word ſignifies, to make it the buſineſs of mind and underſtanding, to *cater for the body*; which is no leſs than to make it the employment of the ſpirit to feed the beaſt; when it ſhould be the buſineſs of mind and underſtanding, to contemplate God and things divine. For otherwiſe, the mind of man is as the field of *Solomon*'s ſluggard, that inſtead of bringing a good crop, is overgrown with thorns and briars; and a man lives in a lie, and hath no judgment. For the uſe of judgment is to obſerve the difference of things, which he doth not, that knows not how to value ſpiritual and eternal things before thoſe that are preſent and temporal.

9. *Laſtly*, If God be not underſtood and acknowledged in our worldly enjoyments, and recommended to us by them: if he be not intended in all our actions, then do we not comply with the relation we ſtand in to God, nor act according to our higheſt principles, nor anſwer our capacity; nor are true to our own intereſt. For it is the work of mind and underſtanding, to ſeek after God, and to find him out in his ways and works, as you read, *Act.* xvii. 27. To be without God in the world, is our degeneracy in full proportion; and to alienate ourſelves from him, is the greateſt and trueſt *ſacrilege*. For our higheſt faculties are God's peculiar, God's appropriate, God's reſerve, made for God, and fit

to attend upon him, and to receive from him. Since therefore there is this danger, *1ſt.* Let us act with caution and with good advice, by converſation with the beſt and wiſeſt men. For 'tis an eaſy matter to be deceived without great care and diligence. *2dly.* But chiefly, let us make *application to God*, by meditation and prayer, who will not be wanting to us. Let us carefully avoid all preſumption, pride, arrogancy, and ſelf-aſſuming. Do not on the ſudden, but ſee before you do, and underſtand well before you act. And *in all thy ways acknowledge God, and lean not to thy own underſtanding.*

DISCOURSE XII.

The Converſion of a SINNER.

EZEK. xviii. 27.

When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedneſs that he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right, he ſhall ſave his ſoul alive.

IF we would be true to our great intereſt, and be wiſe for the great concernments of our ſouls, and ſecure them for eternity; we muſt then put evil from us, and repent of what we have done amiſs; we muſt diſclaim it, and condemn ourſelves in it; we muſt be reformed, and return to our duty.

I ſay,

I. That

I. That the wicked *ought* to reform.
II. That they *may*.

I. That the wicked *ought* to reform.
And that will appear upon theſe ſuggeſtions.
Firſt, *ſin* is contrary to reaſon, credit, and ſafety.
1. Sin is contrary to *reaſon*.

This is the malignant and miſchievous nature of every ſinful action. It is in itſelf *unreaſonable*, contrary to all wiſdom and underſtanding: and you will eaſily grant, that what is againſt reaſon ought not to be done at all; or if it be done, that it ought to be revoked. We cannot ſay worſe of a man, than that he is an *unreaſonable* perſon: nor worſe of an action, than that it is contrary to reaſon. If a man will hear no reaſon, who will have to do with him? For he that will not hear reaſon, will do no *right*; and therefore what is done againſt reaſon muſt be revoked, and diſclaimed. For what is ſo done is done againſt right, which is the rule of all actions. For right is the meaſure of all motion, and the law of heaven. Right is ſo ſacred a thing, that even poverty, neceſſity, calamity, and miſery, which make caſes very pitiable, and compaſſionable, they are not conſiderable, in competition with right, for ſo we read, *Lev.* xix. 15. *Thou ſhalt not countenance a poor man in his cauſe.* Be the man poor or rich, the right of his caſe, and nothing elſe muſt be conſidered in judgment.

2. A ſinful action is *diſcreditable* to any perſon whatſoever. It is ſaid of the ſons of *Eli*, that by their

their wickedneſs, they *made themſelves vile*, 1 Sam. iii. 13. The higher any man is in place, the greater he is in power, the more eminent for birth, and dignity; the greater is his fault if he commit a ſinful action. No man whatſoever hath credit enough to countenance that which is wicked, and ought not to be done.

3. It is grievous, *painful*, and intollerable to bear the *effects* of wicked and ſinful actions, and to vary from right. Unleſs a man diſclaim and revoke it, ſuch actions are very coſtly and dearly paid for; though they promiſe pleaſure for the preſent, yet they lay the foundation of an evil conſcience, and a diſquieted and diſcontented mind; and if they be not repented of, we ſhall rue it to eternity: and that, not only in reſpect of loſs, but miſery; which we cannot now expreſs. For we know not what is meant by *Tophet's burning*, nor fully underſtand what is comprehended in thoſe words of enduring the *worm that dieth not, and the fire that goeth not out.* Let no man deceive himſelf; real ſatisfaction, true content muſt have a ſolid foundation, a clear conſcience, honeſt intention, right actions, an unblameable tenour and courſe of life. And that is the firſt the malignancy and naughtineſs of every ſinful action, as being a contradiction to *reaſon*, againſt right the agents *diſcredit*, a grievous, *painful*, an intollerable thing.

Secondly, Being ſuch, it cannot be juſtified. For this is moſt certain, whatſoever is contrary to the *reaſon of the thing*, or to the *right of the caſe*, is morally null and void, though it be done by any perſon

on whatſoever, I ſay, *null* as to the validity of the hing; though not null and void as to the miſchief t doth to the agent. It is without all authority, nd right. For this power is not in God himſelf; *or his throne is eſtabliſhed in righteouſneſs*, Pro. xxv. ;. It is a principal miſcarriage; ſo that a bad man s not a man of power and priviledge, he is not a nan of excellency; but he is, as a man that is leaf, blind, or lame; that is not diſtinguiſhed from ther men, by any perfection, but by impotency nd deformity. As the *palſy-motion*, which ſeems o be quicker than other, but it is not from ſtrength ut from weakneſs: no man can juſtify a ſinful action, but to a bad conſcience, or before an unrighteous judge; who is either ignorant or partial, or imſelf as bad by undue principles, corrupt intereſt, r an abuſe of power. For it is not *to be able*, for a nan to do that which *ought not* to be done.

Thirdly, Every ſinful action, however we may tand to it, or may be countenanced here in the world, will be diſcountenanced ſooner or latter, whether we will or no. For it will fall under cenſure, and be brought to judgment, and condemned and puniſhed. For *right* ſhall finally prevail: hings themſelves will not long continue out of order. Folly and madneſs will at laſt be weary and aſhamed of themſelves: beſides the judgment of God, which will be according to truth, *for God will bring to light the hidden works of darkneſs*, &c.

Fourthly, If we do not repent of that which we have done ſinfully, it will lie upon us as the blackeſt ſpot, as the heavieſt judgment, and as the worſt malady

malady. Men are ſenſible of bodily evils, but mental are the heavieſt. Moral evil is the greateſt of all evil; for it hath the baſeſt ſymptoms, and moſt unhappy conſequences and the moſt frequent twitches. For moral evil makes an internal wound, a wound in the conſcience, where there is the quickeſt and tendereſt ſenſe. For all bodily evils, the creator of all things hath vouchſafed remedies: but for the evils of the mind, for wounds in the conſcience, there is no remedy, but the motion of the mind in the way of repentance, and application to the blood of Chriſt for expiation, and atonement. *For a wounded ſpirit who can bear*, Prov. xviii. 14.

Now on the other ſide, if a man doth repent, he may be releaſed; for repentance doth alter the caſe. For this is moſt certain, that thoſe who are finite and fallible, if they do fail or miſcarry, upon repentance may be reſtored to favour; and if the fault be repented of, it is morally made null and void. And what we repent of, *God* hath declared he will pardon. And if we repent, and diſclaim, and God pardon, it is then as if it had not been done. Then alſo the goodneſs of God is rightly reſented, and his patience underſtood, and the means of grace are in their right uſe; and thoſe that were ſpiritually dead are quickened unto life; for by ſinful actions men are ſaid to be dead, dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, and St. *Jude* 12. hath it *twice dead*, once dead by ſinning againſt the rule and law of right; and dead again by continuing in impenitency, contumacy and hardneſs of heart.

Fifthly, There is no expectation either of God's pardon

pardon, or of help from him, but in the way of repentance. For who can promiſe himſelf any thing out of the terms of the covenant of grace; *viz. repentance* from all dead works, reſolution of obedience to God, and *faith in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, Acts xx. 21. Repentance is ſo indiſpenſably neceſſary, that he which hath once done amiſs, in reſpect of the habit of the mind, he doth it again and again that doth not repent. For he is the ſame man; and men act like themſelves. You have a good form of words, when men are furious, ſpiteful, and deviliſh, we tell them, that *they ſhew their ſpirits*; and it is very right.

I will now ſuggeſt to you two places of ſcripture for the proof of what I have ſaid in this fifth particular, *viz.* that there is no expectation of God's pardon, or of help from him, but in the way of repentance, 2 *Tim.* ii. 25. *If God peradventure will give them repentance to life.* Which ſhews that there is great hazard of their repentance, who are wilful oppoſers of the truth; and that God will pardon them no other way, intimates this to us, that the caſe is very *hazardous*, whether ſuch as are wilful oppoſers of the truth, ſhall ever be brought to repentance. The other place is, *Acts* viii. 20. where the apoſtle ſpeaks to *Simon Magus*, *Repent of this thy wickedneſs, if perhaps the thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee.* Which ſhews that his ſin was not unpardonable, but that there was no poſſibility of pardon without repentance.

Sixthly and *laſtly*, We are all under obligation to repent, tho' there would no good come to us by it.

For

For we are God's creatures, and hold of him; from whence it follows, that we ought to ſerve him, and to do his will, and to be at his command: for he created us, and doth maintain us; and this being our tenure, we owe duty and obſervance to him; and if we fail in our duty to him, in that caſe, we ought to deprecate his diſpleaſure, and to condemn ourſelves. In that caſe we owe humble acknowledgments, and we are to repent and revoke what we have done amiſs. The performance of obedience and duty to God, that is the *firſt* right; but to repent and ask forgiveneſs, that is the *ſecond*. Now, that repentance ſhall have a good effect, and take place, *that* depends upon *evangelical revelation*: but the obligation to repentance, that is natural. I ſhould, in the uſe of ſober reaſon, think, that if I had failed and were miſtaken, and wanting in my duty to God, that I ought to humble myſelf before him, acknowledge my offence, and ask him pardon, and doing this, I ſhould imagine (in the uſe of ſober reaſon) that God was placable. But this ſuppoſition is put out of all doubt and queſtion by the goſpel; which gives us aſſurance of pardon and remiſſion of ſin, if we do repent and ask God forgiveneſs, and renounce and diſclaim what we have done amiſs. 'Tis true, we are obliged to repent whether God will pardon or not; becauſe we owe duty and obedience to God, as we are his creatures; and if we do not repent, we do, upon account, ſin again. For this take for granted; whoſoever hath done amiſs, and doth not repent of it, and revoke it he lives in that ſin that he hath committed. For

he

he is in ſuch a frame and diſpoſition, that had he the like occaſion and temptation offered him, he would do it again. So that both *nature* and *grace* do meet here, and ſhew the indiſpenſable neceſſity of repentance, in caſe of contracted guilt, and a wounded conſcience.

But becauſe I am to give you *encouragement*; in the

II. Place I will haſten to *that*: and that which I ſhall ſay upon this head is, to give you aſſurance, that through the grace, which God doth afford, and his aſſiſtance of the powers and faculties of his creatures, we *may* repent of all evil done, and make application to God, and deprecate his diſpleaſure, and leave off to ſin, and return to our duty, and ſo obtain his pardon. It is therefore adviſable, that ſince we are, all along in this life, in a ſtate of weakneſs, and imperfection; that we be always in the motion of repentance, and exercife of faith in God, by Jeſus Chriſt. And this exhortation and advice I ground upon the word of God, which tells us, That *if the wicked man turns from his wickedneſs, and doth that which is lawful and right, he ſhall ſave his ſoul alive.*

Neither let any man ſay, that theſe words ſignify no more, than if one ſhould ſay to an impotent man, remove this mountain, and thou ſhalt have ſuch or ſuch a reward: or to bid a man to comprehend the ocean in the hollow of his hand, and it ſhall ſo or ſo be done unto him. Theſe are ludicrous ways of ſpeaking: and ſuch as muſt not be put upon God, nor in any caſe attributed unto him.

God

God doth not mock and deride his poor creatures, when he doth invite them to him. This were to reproach one that were impotent, to bid him come to him, when as he knew he could not ſtir a ſtep. Therefore, when God ſaith to the ſinner, repent and turn from your wickedneſs, and you *ſhall ſave your ſoul alive*; it doth ſuppoſe, that either he *is* able, or that he *will make* him ſo. It being madneſs and folly to take into conſideration, things that are impoſſible: all motion towards ſuch things is to no purpoſe.

But here ſome may be ready to interpoſe, and ſay: ſurely God is not in good earneſt, becauſe he might if he would; for who can reſiſt the divine will? This is a conſiderable *objection*, and doth require an *anſwer*. For ſome men put all upon God, and ſay when he pleaſes to come, with irreſiſtable grace, the work will be done; and the man ſhall be converted; for *who hath reſiſted his will?* And till then, the work will not be done, for they can do nothing. But to this I anſwer.

It doth not follow, that becauſe God doth not *inforce*, that therefore he doth not *enable*. That God ſhould force agrees neither with the nature of *God*, nor with the nature of *man*; but that God ſhould enable, this is natural to the relation we ſtand in to God, who is original to our being. And to make this out; this notion is verified throughout the whole creation. For there is not to be found in the whole creation of God, in any part of the world, any thing that is a *procurant* cauſe, but is alſo a *conſervant* cauſe, till the thing be ſettled in a ſtate of ſufficiency,

ſufficiency, and ſubſiſtency. Even this dull *earth* that we tread upon doth maintain all the plants that do grow out of it. Take a view of the *irrational creatures*, and you ſhall find, that every creature that is original to any thing, doth certainly purſue its firſt production, by after conſervancy, and ready maintenance, and never leave off, till it be ſettled in the ſtate of ſufficiency, and able to ſubſiſt of itſelf.

Now thus I argue: if this be an impreſſion of God upon all creatures, and a perfection which he hath placed in them, is not this much more in God? I therefore take this to be a certain propoſition; that he which doth give the firſt being, gives farther ſtrength for continuance. But *force* agrees not, either with the *nature of God*, or with the *nature of man*.

1. It agrees not with the nature of *God*. An intellectual agent, that hath all knowledge and power, uſeth neither fraud nor violence. This is the neceſſity of thoſe that are indigent.

He that hath all power, and all wiſdom is never put upon the uſe either of fraud or force. This (as I ſaid) belongs to indigent cauſes, and cannot be ſuppoſed of God, who is infinite in power, and wiſdom. Then

2. It doth not agree with the nature of *man*. For ſuch is the nature of man, that if he do not mean and conſent, it is not reputed a human action; for nothing is a human act, but what proceeds from the judgment of reaſon and the liberty of the will, we are always bound to make uſe of our reaſon, for our guidance, and then to exerciſe liberty in purſuance

ſuance of the dictates of our mind. 'Tis true, in this compounded ſtate of fleſh and ſpirit, we are ſo addicted to ſatisfy the inferior appetite, and ſo averſe to the dictates of ſober reaſon and the guidance of the divine Spirit; that had we any thing material to alledge to the contrary, it would certainly make us let all alone, come of it what would. And this would be the greateſt diſcouragement in the world: if we could allege that we were impotent, and inſufficient; and that though the grace of God were abſolutely neceſſary; yet we were not ſure of it. 'Tis therefore neceſſary for us to believe, that through the grace and aſſiſtance of God, we may be able, and that we ſhall not fail thereof. For God is preſent with us, and puts good thoughts into our mind, and will promote them into execution if we be not wanting to ourſelves. We are here in a ſtate of conteſt and fight againſt great variety of enemies abroad; and there is inclinations of the ſenſitive powers within, and the allurements and provocations of objects: and againſt all theſe it is too little, to oppoſe nature's ſtrength. For nature is divided, fleſh and ſpirit, and fleſh in oppoſition to ſpirit. Now the only foundation of certainty and ground of encouragement, is from the *grace* and *aſſiſtance* of God: and this we are aſſured of, if we duly apply ourſelves to God. For the infinite, wiſe and good God doth not call us to that, which he doth not enable us to perform. This were to put that upon God, which neither ſcripture nor reaſon doth allow. For this were in effect to ſay, that God had not a mind we ſhould do that, which he calls

calls upon us to do it, he doth withal impart his grace, help and assistance. For this God knows that he is the first cause, and can do nothing of himself without the first, and from the first must begin. For this is repugnant to reason, that a second cause should have the place of the first cause: or be self-sufficient; this is contrary to the order of the creation. Now if any man shall arrogate to himself a self-sufficiency to do any thing, he would make himself the first cause: whereas he neither is, nor can be the first cause nor original. Therefore all good must begin at God; and nothing that is good, can be done without him; and therefore he must not only *continue*, but *make*, and when we are enabled, we may do that for which he doth enable us. We may hear the voice of God if God speaks to us; and we may obey and comply with his motion. I will give you some instance in scripture for this, *Isa.* xli. 2. God there is said, *to call the righteous man to his foot.* The righteous man here spoken of was *Abraham*, whom God called to follow him, step by step. And the apostle, *Heb.* xi. gives us an account of this in practice, who obeyed God's call, and *went* at his bidding *not knowing whither.*

Another instance you have of the disciples of our Saviour, of whom we read that when our Saviour called them, there was the virtue, power, and sufficiency in the voice of our Saviour, that they left their relations, and employments, and followed our Saviour, without making any question how they should be maintained, *Matt.* iv. 18. The inferior

creatures they have obeyed God contrary to the very impreſſions upon their natures. The *ſun* hath left his courſe and ſtood ſtill, at God's bidding, *Joſh.* x. 12, 13. Fire hath not burnt, and the ſea hath riſen up in heaps, and the ſeveral creatures, though never ſo oppoſite in their natures, one unto another, came into the ark; and though before, they would have deſtroyed one another, yet being called by God to go into the ark, they became tame and harmleſs. So that not only intelligent, but inferior agents know how to obey God, if God appear. Much rather ſhould intelligent agents, who are adapted to hear God's voice, and to be guided by reaſon, anſwer the call of God, when he ſpeaks to them.

DISCOURSE XIII.

The Converſion of a SINNER.

EZEK. xviii. 27.

When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedneſs that he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right, he ſhall ſave his ſoul alive.

THeſe are words not in vain; therefore they do ſuppoſe two things.

I. That the wicked *ought* to reform. And,
II. That they *may*.

I. They

I. They that have committed wickedneſs *ought* to diſclaim it, repent, leave off to ſin, and return to their duty. And,

II. That they *may*; elſe it might be replied to theſe words; *God ſuppoſeth that which cannot be done*, and this every where paſſeth for an undeniable anſwer. And to ſuppoſe this, is a defect in any wiſe agent: much more in the all-wiſe God, who never makes a vain ſhew. It is not only below him, but unworthy of him, to deride men in miſery; when he calls upon them to repent and turn to him. True indeed, if men will not hear his voice, then he will *laugh at their deſtruction*, and *mock when their fear cometh upon them*. As therefore we may not make a mock of ſin, neither doth God mock at ſinners. But to make this out, that the wicked *may* turn from their wickedneſs.

In every nature, there are two things as the proviſion of God's creation, and its ſecurity, *viz.*

1. A principle of *ſelf-preſervation*.

2. A motion of *reſtitution* and recovery.

1ſt. A principle of *ſelf-preſervation* in its true proper and natural ſtate: from which of itſelf it doth never depart; but by the violence of other agents, which it cannot reſiſt; and therefore is ſometimes driven from itſelf. This is the account that ſome give of ſtorms, tempeſts earthquakes, and the like. But nature's motion is orderly and leiſurely; as the ſeveral ſeaſons of the year, that follow one another: where the former give place unto the latter. This is the firſt principle in nature: and the

2d Is a power of *recovery*, and ſelf-reſtoration,

when that which did diſturb is taken off. Thence it is, that we expect fair weather after foul; ſerene after ſtormy; and clear, after clouds. This is an obſervation from the ſtate of the creation, things without us or about us.

Now, is there any perfection in the *lower nature*, that is not in the *higher*? Therefore we are to ſuppoſe that this is eminently in ſuperior nature. Now to bring this obſervation home to our purpoſe. To a moral agent, ſuch as man is; he being endowed with reaſon and underſtanding, and inveſted with liberty and freedom: nothing is more unnatural than ſin and wickedneſs. For it is againſt the reaſon of our mind, and againſt the reaſon of the thing. It is a contradiction to the *reaſon of our mind*, which is our governor; that which guides the actions of our will: and to the *reaſon of things*, which gives law, and is the rule of action; and wickedneſs is a great contradiction to both. Wickedneſs in man is as monſtrous and unnatural, as darkneſs in the ſun, which is the luminary of the world: wickedneſs is ſuch a thing as filth in the water; as infection in the air: wickedneſs is ſuch a thing as a diſeaſe in the conſtitution of nature, and we ſay nature is every man's beſt phyſician. What are agues and fevers, but nature charged with an enemy that tends to its diſſolution, and therefore labours to ſhake it off? And therefore phyſicians endeavour to help and aſſiſt nature, and put her into motion; by which ſhe will diſcharge herſelf of all malignant and offenſive matter. Now, I ſay, ſhall nature recover, and ſhall not grace ſuperadded to nature, do the like?

We

We uſe to ſay of all habits joined to natural powers that they do facilitate; and we eaſily do that, which we do by the help of acquired habits. Now the firſt thing in rational nature is not at all to vary from the rule of right: and this would be to anſwer the conſtitution of God's creation, in man. But in caſe he fails here, in the ſecond place, is the motion of repentance; and herein lies our double ſecurity, ſafety and perfection. It is therefore highly neceſſary, that we be always in a diſpoſition towards repentance, and free to the exerciſe of faith in God, by Jeſus Chriſt: that ſo the guilt of no ſin may lie upon our conſciences: for this is the motion of recovery, in human nature.

So that now put the caſe of us men as we find it. Our conſciences will tell us, that we have done amiſs, by departing from the rule of right; and by conſenting to iniquity: for guilt is burdenſome to the mind, and will be a wound in our ſpirits. Now if the *firſt*, which is beſt, fail, *viz.* our *innocence*, and *integrity*, wherewith we were inveſted in the moment of our creation: let us betake ourſelves to the *ſecond*, the motion of *repentance*; which is for our recovery, and is the grace of the goſpel: and in ſo doing, there will be hope, as we read *Ezra* x. 2. And let us not loſe ourſelves, by adding iniquity to our ſin, or by deſpair after guilt contracted. For a ſecond ſin, is not only another of the ſame kind, but the conſummation of the former: inſomuch that he is reputed to do the ſame evil once again, that he hath once done and doth not repent of it. Let us not live in a lie, flatter ourſelves with that

which will not profit; for there are in man many lying refuges, and fooliſh boaſtings, and vain glory. The apoſtle tells us of ſome, that *glory in their ſhame*, Phil. iii. 19. that do applaud themſelves, as if they were not under the obligation of judgment, and conſcience; but were free to do any thing, that is either pleaſurable, or profitable, or expedient for their purpoſe, or what they have a mind to do. For of ſome we ſay, there is *no fear of God before their eyes*; no reverence of the deity in their minds, but are free to their ungoverned wills, and to their luſts; whereas this is worthy of human nature, to overcome a man's own will, and to bridle his luſts. For *will is no rule*, nor can juſtify any thing; and luſts are very importunate, *Jam.* iv. 1. *Whence come wars and fightings? come they not hence, even from your luſts that war in the ſoul?* Whereas he that ruleth his own ſpirit, doth a greater act *than he which taketh a city*: nothing is the true improvement of the rational faculties but the exerciſe of the ſeveral virtues, of ſobriety, temperance, chaſtity, modeſty, gentleneſs, humility, obedience in all things to God, and charity and good will to men. Theſe are acts of excellency, theſe are indeed acts of power; by theſe the minds of men are regulated, and refined, diſcharged of fury, rage and exorbitant paſſions. By theſe a man is made to act *like himſelf*: whereas, without theſe, a man acts like a perſon in a frenſy, diſtracted and mad, like ſavage people, or like beaſts of prey, that worry and deſtroy one another: whereas by moderate uſe of the conveniencies of nature; by modeſty, humility gentleneſs; by patience

ence and obedience to God, by charity, love and good will towards men, a man is qualified for the enjoyment of God, and reconciled to the law of heaven, the rule of righteouſneſs, and fitted for attendance upon God in the other ſtate, and to enjoy him for ever.

Now, if it may be ſaid of common education, *viz.* of learning, and the ſtudy of the *liberal ſciences*, that it doth qualify and calm the minds of men, and bring them to gentleneſs and ſobriety; upon which ſuppoſition the *Roman* emperors that were ſuch great warriors, did forbid the ſtudy of philoſophy, becauſe it ſpoiled men for ſoldiers: I ſay, if this be true of common education, how much more of *chriſtian graces*, by which we are taught to imitate Chriſt, who was meek, and lowly in ſpirit. 'Tis in the exerciſe of theſe virtues, that a man ſhews his ſtrength and valour, above the inferior creation. Whereas on the contrary, by envy, wrath pride, and haughtineſs, men become deviliſh: but by doing good, men reſemble God. By the ſeveral virtues, the mind is purified, and made fit to converſe with God, and to receive from him: and therefore it is ſaid by the prophet, Iſai. i. 16, 18. *Waſh ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, ceaſe to do evil, learn to do well. Come now let us reaſon together, ſaith the Lord.* Wherefore, I ſay with the apoſtle, *Eph.* v. 14. *Awake thou that ſleepeſt, and ariſe from the dead, and Chriſt ſhall give thee life.* Awake all you that have fallen aſleep, in the ſecurity of ſinful pleaſures, and through neglect of God, and your duty: and this

is

is my argument; and the force of my exhortation; *Chriſt is ready to give you life.*

And if I had not good warrant to ſay this, there would be no force in my exhortation; and I ſhould then labour in vain. Whereas being ſatisfied that *God is in this exhortation*, and ready to aſſiſt all good endeavours with his aid, help, and aſſiſtance; this gives great encouragement, and ſpeaks to all points, and anſwers all objections to the contrary. Here is then an exhortation in the *name of God*; otherwiſe were it only the voice of a man, it would produce no good effect.

But this I take for granted, that where there is monitions and warning from God in caſe of dangers; that there the man *is able*, or that God is ready to *make him ſo*. And if you do not ſuppoſe this, all thoſe exhortations in ſcripture for men to leave their ſins, and to repent, and turn to God, which are ſo frequent, are to no purpoſe, unleſs men be able, or that God is ready by his grace to make them ſo. I ſay, all thoſe exhortations do ſuppoſe neceſſary aid and aſſiſtance. And the apoſtle, *Heb.* iv. 16. hath an excellent form of words to this purpoſe, though it be not ſo plain in our tranſlation; for we read it, *let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need*: whereas in the original it is, *grace for a neceſſary ſupply.*

Now this is all that I have aimed at; to prove not only that God is ready to receive us, if we repent and turn unto him; but alſo willing to aid and aſſiſt us. Therefore depend upon this, as that which

which you may truſt unto; for without this, neither our religion nor our ſafety have any great ſecurity: if God, for his part, be not willing and ready to afford neceſſary aid and aſſiſtance. But that you may believe this, I can give you all the aſſurance of reaſon and ſcripture. Yea, ſurvey the *whole creation of God*, and you ſhall find that God hath provided for all neceſſary effects. Hath he not ſecured the world, for light and heat, by the ſun? doth the ſun fail, after ſo many thouſand years, to give light and warmth, any more than it did at firſt? This is the promiſe of God, to ſecure the neceſſary effect to the preſervation of the ſeveral creatures. Hath not God provided the clouds of heaven to drop down fatneſs, and to ſend rain to wet the earth, that otherwiſe would be ſpoiled with heat and duſt; I might run through the whole creation, and ſhew how every thing is fitted for our uſe, and to ſecure the effects that are neceſſary and proper for us.

But I go on. No conſiderate mind, that is privy to its own ſlipperineſs, dare be ſelf-confident. He that is ſenſible of his own irreſolution, and ſudden ſurprizal through temptation together with his weakneſs, is, ſo far from being ſelf-confident, or from truſting to his own ſtrength that if he ſhould leave God out, he would ſoon give over and ſink down into deſpair; and not think himſelf ſufficient to manage ſo great an affair, as the things of reaſon, and the tranſactions of time and preparations for eternity. We are always to underſtand, and to remember, that we are but ſecond cauſes, and have ſufficiency only in God, who is firſt and principal in every thing that good is; and if God be with us, we are enabled. Where-

Wherefore be reſolved in this matter, that *God is with us*, and that he is ready to afford his grace and aſſiſtance. And this is a thing of univerſal acknowledgment. For all ſober and conſiderate men, when they do engage in any thing conſiderable, they ſay, *in the name of God*; and when they part with one another, they ſay, *God be with you*. Let us therefore in every thing begin with God, which is to follow the direction of our bleſſed Saviour, *Luke* xiv. 28. who ſaith, *which of you intending to build a tower, ſitteth not down firſt, and counteth the coſt, whether he have ſufficient to finiſh it. Or who is he that will go forth to war againſt a great and potent enemy, that doth not firſt ſit down and conſider, whether he be able to meet him.*

Now that you may not loſe this great argument and principle of reformation, and true and ſolid ground of encouragement, to leave off to ſin, and to return to God, becauſe of his gracious aid and aſſiſtance, I will give you aſſurance farther by theſe ſix particulars.

Firſt, It was *never* God's intention when he made man at firſt, to put him into a ſtate of abſolute *independency*, or *ſelf-ſufficiency*. And therefore whoſoever aſſumes it to himſelf, doth aſſume that which never did belong to a creature-ſtate. God always did intend, that his creatures ſhould depend upon him, and hold of him: for man was made but in the place and order of a ſecond cauſe, and a ſecond cauſe is no cauſe divided from the firſt. Therefore it was always the report of wiſdom, *acknowledge God in all thy ways; and lean not to thine own underſtanding*

Prov.

Prov. iii. 5. This was a duty of *Adam* in paradiſe, even while he continued in innocency; before ever he meddled with the forbidden fruit; and he miſcarried, becauſe he did forget his dependence upon God, and withdrew himſelf from him. Thoſe words of the pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* xxxvii. 5. *Commit thy way unto the Lord, truſt alſo in him*, are not directions only for this lapſed ſtate: theſe are directions ſuitable and connatural to the very firſt inſtitution of God. As alſo that of the prophet, *Iſa.* l. 10. *Truſt in the Lord*, and *ſtay thy ſelf upon thy God*, and as he there goes on moſt excellently. *v.* 11. *Behold all ye that kindle a fire, that compaſs yourſelves about with ſparks that you have kindled, but this ſhall you have at my hand, ye ſhall lie down in ſorrow.* They are ſure enough to fail and be diſappointed in their undertaking, be it never ſo good, they will end in ſorrow and ſhame, if they do not begin with God, and look up to him, as the only ſelf-ſufficient cauſe. For alas! *none of us are wiſe enough for our own direction*, in any of the ordinary affairs of life, *or able enough for our own defence*: we do not ſee before us, nor underſtand what evils may befal us. If we walk in the ſtreets, we are not ſure of one another; for he that deſpiſes God or the laws, may be maſter of any man's life. So that if we leave out God, or God be neglected, we ſhall be fruſtrated and diſappointed; and then we may juſtly reflect upon our own preſumption and folly. For we went out in our own ſtrength, and God was not in all our thoughts; and therefore he doth not give iſſue and ſucceſs. This was the ſtate of the creation, the

creatures

creature's reference to God, and the creator's influence upon the creature, and communication of himſelf to him; and that which was not in the ſtate of innocence, cannot be ſuppoſed to be in the ſtate of weakneſs, and contracted impotency and debility. Yea, to tell you of a ſelf-ſufficient creature, is a contradiction *in ſubjecto*; for all things derive from their original, and refer thereunto. As *Solomon* hath obſerved, *the place from whence the waters come, thither they do return*, Eccl. i. 7. This is a reaſon beyond all contradiction. I could triumph in this argument; 'tis without all poſſibility of anſwer or evaſion. Therefore there is an abſolute inſufficiency in every ſecond cauſe; and what is a ſecond cauſe, is applied without effect, when the firſt cauſe is abſent, or doth not move. This is the firſt. But,

Secondly, Could man alledge either *neceſſity* of evil, or *impoſſibility* of doing good, it would be a plea when God calls us to an account, and admits us to reaſon with him. For the ſcripture tells us, that God doth do ſo, not only at the *day of judgment*, but even *now*; and every one hath heard the voice of God calling upon him, to give a reaſon of his actions. *Come now* (ſaith the prophet in the name of God) *let us reaſon together*, Iſa. i. 18. and argue the caſe, and I will let you judge between me and yourſelves, *what could I have done more to my vineyard than I have done*, Iſa. v. 4. But what have you done anſwerable? But if ſin were neceſſary, it could not be avoided; and if a man's duty were impoſſible, it could not be done; this would be an anſwer to God himſelf. But, that there is no ne-

ceſſity

ceſſity of evil, or any impoſſibility of doing good, and becoming virtuous, I will ſhew you from that paſſage of our Saviour, *Matt.* xi. 21. who ſaith to that wicked generation, *that if the mighty works that had been done among them, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented.* Which ſhews, that there was no impoſſibility in the matter, but that it might have been done; otherwiſe this ſpeech of our Saviour had been vain, and to no purpoſe. Upon this account it is, that we read, *Jude* 15. That at the day of judgment God will *convince all the ungodly*, and challenge them for *all their hard ſpeeches*, and *ungodly deeds, that they have committed*; and ſhew, that they had no reaſon, either to ſpeak or think hardly of him; ſo that if this could be made out, that it were abſolutely impoſſible to avoid evil, and to do good, and diſcharge our duty; *this* would be an anſwer to the indictment, that might be brought againſt us at the laſt day of judgment. For *neceſſaries* cannot be otherwiſe than they are, nor that which is *impoſſible*, otherwiſe than it is. So that before any judgment of condemnation paſs from a righteous judge; it muſt appear, that neither any one was neceſſarily wicked; nor was it impoſſible, to have been virtuous. Therefore theſe things will appear otherwiſe, or men will not condemn themſelves, nor juſtify God in his dealings. And doth not our Saviour plainly intimate this, when he tells you that *Chorazin* and *Bethſaida*, as they *ought* to have repented, ſo they *might* have done it; and others *would* have done it upon the like means, as hath been already ſaid. It is true of ſinners, what *Saul* ſaid

ſaid of himſelf, 1 *Sam.* xiii. 12. *I forced myſelf*, when he did that which he ought not to have done. So it will be found of all ſinners, that they have done that which was *unnatural* and againſt the reaſon of their minds; which had they followed, they would not have been wicked.

Thirdly, Where there is *excellency of nature*, there is always readineſs to communicate, ſupply and gratify. We commonly ſay, 'tis *not majeſty without goodneſs*: all excellency is eaſy to give allowance to ſhew grace and favour. A good diſpoſitioned man ſaith *Ariſtotle*, is ready to make a candid interpretation, and overlook an injury; and it is more generous *not to take cognizance* of a fault, than to forgive. It is *God-like* to pardon to gratify, to do good. In caſe of miſery, it belongs to goodneſs, to make a ſupply. They think meanly of God, that think he doth leſs to recover his creature, than doth conſiſt with infinite clemency and compaſſion; that God doth leſs than what might ſerve the turn, or that he is wanting in neceſſaries, to ſave his creatures harmleſs, or bring them to good. This I depend upon in a way of reaſon; that infinite goodneſs will not do leſs than is neceſſary, or than will ſerve the turn. But then as reaſon ſpeaks, ſo alſo doth God ſpeak of himſelf, by thoſe impreſſions he hath made of himſelf, upon all creatures. For all creatures that are *original* to any other, they have this in them, to take care of their young, and to watch over them, till they are able to make their own defence and ſupply. This is true throughout the *whole creation* of God; and hear what God hath ſaid of himſelf,

Pſal.

lcxlv. 9. *God is good to all: and his tender mer-*
ıre over all his works. Therefore I will rather
t, *that God did not make the world, than that he*
fail to be very good unto the creatures that he hath
. For I ſee it otherwhere quite otherwiſe.
ırthermore, we find good affection every where
nmended, and the contrary every where blam-
ıd diſparaged. We admire goodneſs, tender-
and compaſſion; but on the contrary, every
complains of envy, malice, hard-heartedneſs,
:y. We therefore may be ſure, that goodneſs
ɔt be wanting in God, the want whereof God
es in his creatures.

urthly, We cannot *ſay worſe* of God, than that
ılls and monitions to his creatures, are not ſe-
, and in good earneſt, and out of love and good
. I can make no other explication of that
ction of God's *ſecret and revealed will*, but that
lo declare the ſelf *ſame will* in God; but it is
cret will, before he hath declared it: and his
led will, when he hath made it known. Juſt
: ſecrets of a man, knoweth no man, but him-
nd he to whom he will reveal them: ſo the
f God is not known, till God himſelf declare
'or to ſpeak of a ſecret and a revealed will in
contrary one unto another, is without war-
for it is the *ſame will in another ſtate*. And this
well aſſured and reſolved of, becauſe this would
honeſty here below in the very judgment of
, to pretend and not to intend; to make a
and overture, and to reſolve in a man's mind
ntrary, is a great diſhoneſty, in the judgment
of

of reaſon. And we have no other principle to diſcern the nature of God by, than the light of reaſon; and therefore the prophet ſaith, *Iſa.* xlvi. 8. *Shew yourſelves to be men*; that is, uſe your reaſon, and he ſpeaks it in this caſe, of judging in the ways and things of God. *To whom*, ſaith he, *will ye liken me and make me equal?* Will you compare me with your idols, that are made of ſilver and gold, and carried upon mens ſhoulders, and ſet in a place from whence they cannot remove? and though one cry unto them yet cannot they anſwer, nor ſave themſelves out of trouble. *Remember this, and ſhew yourſelves men, bring it again to mind, O ye tranſgreſſors.* Wherefore we cannot think that to be a perfection *above*, which is baſe and an imperfection *below*. For thoſe things that are true, are eternal truths, always were ſo, and will be ſo immutably and unalterably. And upon this account, it is very hard to think of God that he will not contribute that which is neceſſary to his creature, to do that which he calls him unto, eſpecially in ſuch things, where the creature is undone, if the thing be not done; and where none elſe but God can do it, nor help any otherwhere to be found. In ſuch caſe how can we make it out, which is declared of God; *that he would not the death of a ſinner*; if he do not that which is neceſſary to bring him to repentance and unto life? We are told, *Wiſd.* xi. 24. that *he hateth nothing that he made*; but is the lover of ſouls. And therefore he cannot be wanting in neceſſaries to ſave them harmleſs, and to bring them to good. And this acknowledgment is made in our publick prayers: and upon

on this account it is, that we are adviſed, to *caſt away our tranſgreſſions, and to make us clean hearts*, and thus expoſtulated withal, *for why will you die? Have I any pleaſure at all that the wicked ſhould die, or in the death of him that dieth? wherefore turn and live.* Ezek. xviii. 23. 31, 32. xxxiii. 11. And it is very obſervable, that he which bids us do theſe works hath alſo promiſed, that he will work them in us, *Ezek.* xxxvi. 26. *I will ſprinkle clean water upon you and you ſhall be clean; and a new heart will I give you, and I will put my ſpirit upon you, Jer.* xxxii. 39. and *Heb.* viii. 10. Now theſe places are very eaſily reconciled, by acknowledging God's ſuperintendency, as the original and firſt cauſe; and mens labour, care, and diligence, as a ſecond cauſe. So that it may be ſaid, that man doth it, as we attribute an effect to an inſtrument: and it muſt be acknowledged, that God doth it, becauſe he is chief and principal. We read, *Jonah* iv. 2. that God is ſaid to be a God of great pity: and elſewhere we read, that he delighteth in mercy; and what perſons delight in, they do eaſily and readily. Farther, let it be conſidered, that the fault is laid upon us, and we are charged with careleſſneſs and ſelf-neglect, if the thing be not done, *Prov.* i. 31. *I have called, but ye refuſed, and would have none of my counſels.* So, *Hoſea* xiii. 9. *O Iſrael, thou haſt deſtroyed thyſelf:* and *John* vi. 40. *ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.* This is the fourth particular.

DISCOURSE XIV.

The Converſion of a SINNER.

EZEK. xviii. 27.

When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedneſs that he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right, he ſhall ſave his ſoul alive.

FIFTHLY, To aſſert our impotency and diſability, and that God is wanting in neceſſary aſſiſtance, is to expoſe us to an invincible *temptation*; and that in theſe three particulars.

1*ſt*, To entertain *hard thoughts of God*, and ſuch as are unworthy of him.

2*dly*, To *throw off the uſe of all means*, and to take no care at all, in this great affair.

3*dly*, Finally, to *deſpair*; and we wrong God more by deſperation, than by preſumption. I ſay, to aſſert our inability, and that God is wanting in neceſſary aid and aſſiſtance, would be to expoſe us to think the *hardeſt thoughts* imaginable *of God*; even ſo far, as to neglect and throw off the uſe of all *means*, and to final deſperation. For what are means if the end be not attained by them? Means are not valuable for themſelves, nor will any body be at the charge of them, but in reſpect of the end. And whoſe heart will ſerve him to act, when he hath no manner of hope? and who can have any hope

hope if he have no confidence, that God will aid and aſſiſt? I add farther; to think that God is implacable, and irreconcileable, is the way to come unto the very temper of the devils themſelves; but that God is ready with his grace and influence, is that which hath an univerſal acknowledgment; as appears from theſe three things.

1*ſt*. There is not a man among us of any ſenſe and reaſon, that will engage in any matter of weight but he will ſay, *in the name of God.*

2*dly*. There is no man of any ſobriety if he relate how he hath eſcaped any danger; but he will interpoſe theſe words, *God be thanked*, or, *as God would have it.*

3*dly*. All men of conſideration and ſobriety, when they part, will ſay, *God be with you.* Which obſervations import, that it is ſuitable, and connatural to the nature of man, to apply to God, and to acknowledge him, and to think that God will be with us, to aſſiſt and direct us.

Sixthly and laſtly, God hath *done ſo much* on his part, that he hath given us all reaſon to believe, and think that he is well-minded towards us: and that he is reſolved in the matter of our recovery, upon terms, that are made eaſy, and poſſible. And to make this appear I will offer you theſe eight particulars.

Firſt. Take into conſideration, the length of God's patience: for were God for our deſtruction, he would take us at the firſt advantage, and opportunity, as enemies are wont to do. For who lets an enemy go out of his hand? Men will hardly ſuf-

fer an enemy to live; but prevail againſt him what they can; leſt, if they ſhould let him go out of their hand, and let him alone, he ſhould meditate their deſtruction. And this is that, which is apparent, and the ſcripture ſuppoſes it, *Eccl.* viii. 2. *Becauſe ſentence againſt an evil work is not ſpeedily executed, therefore the hearts of the ſons of men are ſet in them to do evil.* But 2 *Pet.* iii. 9. we are told, that, *the long-ſuffering of God* doth not proceed either from his weakneſs, or want of power, but from his *willingneſs that we ſhould not periſh.* He would have us come to a better underſtanding, and take a courſe that we might live. This is the firſt thing that I would ſuggeſt, that God is well-minded towards us, and willing to do us good. The

Second thing that I would offer, is the *checks* of our own *conſciences.* Now the checks of our own conſciences, in all bad ways, we have very great cauſe to attribute them unto God, as his awakenings of us. And that for this reaſon, becauſe ſinning doth contract hardneſs and reprobacy of mind; and diſables the mind for its true and proper work; and makes it as ſalt that hath loſt its ſavour. *We all find it far eaſier, to commit a ſecond ſin than the firſt.* Therefore we are to look upon the check of our own conſciences as the voice of God.

Thirdly, The abundant proviſion, that God hath made *for our recovery*, ſhews that he is in good earneſt. There is *expiation* of ſin; and the aſſiſtance of his grace and ſpirit, for the recovering of us; and God would not have done all this, if he had not been in good earneſt. Here, I will take up the

argument

argument of *Manoah*'s wife, *Judges* xiii. 22. *We ſhall ſurely die*, ſaid he, *becauſe we have ſeen God*. But his wife ſaid unto him, *v.* 23. *If the Lord were pleaſed to kill us, he would not have received a burnt-offering at our hand, nor ſhewn us ſuch things as he hath done.* 'Tis not reaſonable to think, that God having made a large proviſion for our relief and recovery; that he ſhould lay a reſtraint upon the ſovereign virtue of that, which is his own remedy; but ſuffer it to grapple with the malignancy of the diſtemper, though it extend never ſo far. So that if a good effect doth not follow, it is not becauſe God hath been wanting on his part, nor becauſe he hath not done that which lay upon him to do. If ſuch a remedy prove ineffectual, it muſt be from ſome other cauſe, *viz.* from ſome obſtacle or impediment, or want of due application: or becauſe of the perſon's impatience under cure, or becauſe things are allowed and delighted in, that are of a contrary nature, and quality; and not for want of good will in the all-wiſe God. For the means that God uſeth are in themſelves ſufficient, and in caſe they prove without effect, 'tis becauſe they are not followed.

Men fall ſhort in their repentance, becauſe after men have been ſorrowful, they return again to their former iniquities. Whereas, upon repentance there ſhould follow *works meet for repentance*, *Mat.* iii. 8. 'Tis an excellent ſaying that which you find in *Eccluſ* xxxiv. 25, 26. *He that waſheth himſelf becauſe he hath touched a dead body, and goeth and toucheth it again, what doth his waſhing profit him? So he that*

humbleth himſelf for his ſins and doth the ſame things again, what doth his humbling profit him?

So again, for *faith*, which is another remedy of God's proviſion; for he ſaith, he that *believeth ſhall be ſaved*. Now what doth a man's faith ſignify, if a man profeſs to believe; if he do not do thoſe things which naturally follow upon ſuch a belief; or as they do, who do really and truly believe; what profit can a man expect from ſuch an empty and inſignificant faith, as S. *James* ſpeaks, *Jam.* ii. 14. *Can ſuch a faith ſave him?* Who will think that a man doth believe, who doth things clear contrary to that which he ſaith he believes? Again:

What come the offers of grace unto, which ſhew the favour of God towards ſinners; if they be not cloſed with, or if men *receive the grace of God in vain*? What doth all this ſignify, if that complaint of the prophet may be taken up, *that we have laboured in vain*, and *ſpent our ſtrength in vain*. To what purpoſe are thoſe prophets ſent by God, *that riſe up early*, and ſit up late, if *men incline not their ears, and will not liſten? Jer.* xxv. 4. Then in reſpect of the ſinner's ſtate and condition; can he be otherwiſe than extremely miſerable, that is not cured of the rancor and venom that the practice of iniquity hath poiſoned his ſpirit withal? For miſery ariſeth from within; 'tis not by any impoſition from the effects of any power without us: but a man is miſerable from his own inward malignity and naughty diſpoſition. So that if a man be not cured by all the remedies that are applied, he is not healed of the wound that guilt and ſin hath made

in

in his conſcience which are the true productive cauſe of his malady and diſtemper. And if this effect be not wrought, it is becauſe the patient is refractory and ſtubborn. And that is the third thing, *viz.* thoſe *proviſions* that God hath made which are worthy, honourable, noble, available and effectual, if we do not obſtruct and hinder; but are patient under God's cure, and application of the remedy. The

Fourth thing that I ſhall inſtance in, is the *nature and quality of the things* that God, upon account of religion, does require of us, *viz.* Thoſe things whereof religion doth conſiſt: and they are internal good diſpoſitions and acts that are ſuitable, and do of their own accord follow. I ſay, an *internal good diſpoſition* and ſuch acts as are ſuitable and connatural thereunto, and follow of their own accord. For by our carriage and behaviour, by our words and ſpeech, we ſhew our mind and temper; by what we do, and practiſe. In our publick devotion we make this acknowledgment to God, that *his ſervice is perfect freedom*, and we are bid, *Gal.* v. 1. *To ſtand faſt in that liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made us free.* And the goſpel is called the *royal law of liberty*, *Jam.* ii. 8. For the chriſtian ſtate is not as the *Jewiſh*; the apoſtles did not think fit to lay any ſuch burdens upon believers, as were in the *Jewiſh* ſtate, for that is called, *Acts* xv. 10. *A yoke which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear.* Such things were impoſed upon them, as had goodneſs only as they were warranted, and enjoined by him that had power. But all acts in the chriſtian religion

religion, have an *intrinſick goodneſs*, and in their own nature are ſanatory and deſirable: and this ſpeaks *honourably* of the chriſtian religion, that whatſoever it lays upon us, or enjoins, is either good in itſelf, or for the ſociety, or for recovery in caſe of failing and miſcarriage. They are either *operative* to ſuch an eſtate as is good, or *conſervative* of men in ſuch a ſtate, or *prohibitive* of the contrary. They are either for our ſecurity in a good eſtate, or for recovery out of a bad one: they are ſuch things as are good in themſelves, and do ſanctify and purify our minds, and make us right and ſound, and ſuch as we ought to be. I might inſtance in all the acts required by the chriſtian religion, and make it good of every one of them; which cannot be ſaid of poſitive inſtitution, ſuch as was the prohibition to *Adam* and *Eve*, *Gen.* ii. 17. *Not to eat of ſuch a tree.* Neither do we take notice of any ſuch prohibition in the goſpel: but what we find pleaſurable or convenient, 1 *Cor.* x. 25, 27. *we eat, asking no queſtion for conſcience ſake.* Alſo thoſe prohibitions that were under the *levitical* law, for neglect whereof, the ſons of *Aaron* were ſo puniſhed as alſo *Uzzah*, for touching the ark; though with a good mind to keep it from falling; and the *Bethſhemites* for looking into it. There are now no ſuch things required, ſo hazardous and dangerous: for ſuch things men had not the ſecurity of their minds, but their ſecurity lay only in their *memories* and not in the rectitude of their *temper*. Whereas we have the ſecurity of our temper, becauſe thoſe things that are forbidden, are baſe and unworthy. So that when evil is preſented to us, we preſently

preſently give an anſwer *how can I do this wickedneſs and ſin againſt God?* And out of a ſenſe of the impurity of the thing *we* preſently object againſt it. Whereas *they* had only the ſecurity of their memories which is frail and fallible faculty; for we are apt to forget, and do not often think. And this we find, that it is far harder for intellectual nature to do a thing where we ſee no reaſon for it, or to forbear any thing, if we do not ſee any reaſon why, eſpecially if it be againſt our way and temper. But in the chriſtian religion thoſe things that are commanded are regular and kindly, becauſe our minds are caſt into the ſame mould with them, and framed into ſuitableneſs and conformity with them: ſo that we act ourſelves, without any great conſideration; we are ready to make application to God, and to place all affiance and confidence in him; and to do all acts of righteouſneſs and juſtice; and to govern ourſelves according to the rules of ſobriety and temperance; becauſe we are reconciled in nature and temper, to all theſe things: ſo that it is an eaſy thing to be religious, upon the terms of chriſtianity. We worſhip God readily, becauſe we are in temper, God-like, according to our meaſure and degree. *Seneca* ſaith, "If a man would be holy and righteous, let "him *imitate God*; and if a man do partake of "God he is ſuch and will be ſuch." But why ſhould I quote the philoſopher, ſince the apoſtle ſaith, we *partake of the divine nature*, by a principle of holineſs and righteouſneſs, 2 *Pet.* ii. 4. This is the *fourth* thing, the nature and *quality of thoſe things that God doth require of us.*

Fifthly,

Fifthly, The *equal conſideration* that we meet with at the hands of God, in reſpect of our preſent weakneſs, ſhews that God is ready and willing to do us good. And to make this out, I ſay, that if any man ſuffer difficulty in the diſcharge of his duty, (as I muſt confeſs ſeveral tempers do, more or leſs, as to particular virtues; to ſome tempers, ſuch acts of virtue are very eaſy, that to others are more hard and difficult. Now in this diſparity, if by conſideration, reaſon and argument a man bring himſelf to that which is to be done, God accepts it the rather as an act of *high virtue*, and true goodneſs. And the more of difficulty a man finds in himſelf, God looks upon it as done with more reſolution; and he will not reject it; becauſe the man ſuffered *difficulty*; but look upon it as the more *eminently virtuous*; notwithſtanding ſuch indiſpoſition and avocation. Now this is the faireſt meaſure imaginable: God doth make allowance for our temper, complexion, and conſtitution; for our prejudices from our education, and ſuppoſitions upon miſtakes, and for our former converſe and acquaintance, which many times doth occaſion ſome difficulty in the diſcharge of our duty. For *he conſiders our frame, and as a father pitieth his children, ſo the Lord pitieth thoſe that fear him*, Pſal. ciii. 13. And this is a great encouragement to us, that we ſhall meet with all fair conſtruction; and that we are upon good terms with God. And as this is for our encouragement, ſo doth it declare God's gracious intentions towards us, and that he is in good earneſt deſirous to do us good, and that he will not be ſevere with

us. That he will neither neglect nor refuſe any good in us; for he will not deſtroy any thing that partakes of his own nature; but will foſter and cheriſh any thing that is God-like. And for our miſtakes, ſo our hearts be right, God will mend them, by his own candid conſtruction, and gracious interpretation. And this meaſure *Abimelech* found, *Gen.* xx. 6. *I know that thou didſt it in the integrity of thy heart.* Though he was to blame in the matter, yet becauſe he was right in the main, God overlooks his fault. For, if we do not conſent, the action is not reckoned as ours. As on the one hand, it is no virtue to do well without an intention: ſo on the other, 'tis not reckoned as our ſin, if we fall through miſtake. I add to this, that there is great congruity between our own being and the nature of things enjoyned by religion. The apoſtle ſaith, *Rom.* vii. 15. *I conſent to the law that it is good*: here is the congruity of the *agent* and the *object*. And *David* ſaith, *Pſal.* cxix. 142. *Thy law is truth* that is, it is ſuch as it ſhould be. *David* was reconciled in temper, to the law of God. To the ſame degree that we are endued with holineſs, to the ſame degree we are poſſeſt of *happineſs*. The mind is the man in reſpect of the excellency of the part for mind is ten thouſand to one above body: and alſo, in reſpect of the *act* that is performed; what is done with the conſent of the mind is beſt done. What men do againſt their minds, is of no value, though the thing done be good in itſelf; nor of any deep malignity, if done with a good mind, though through miſtake. Not only the gracious

God

God, but all good men go by this rule; they do not value things as they are *materially* conſidered, but by the *mind* and *intention* of the party; not that which is done, but what was *meant* and intended. If it prove an injury, a good man will accept of the good intention; and that is the *fifth* particular.

Sixthly, Though God begin with leſs, he *will go on* with more. For this I dare ſay, if a man be ſerious in his religion, and duly ſenſible of his own vanity and inſufficiency; and of the many avocations, and temptations from abroad; the grace of God will not be ſhort. Though God doth not give all at firſt, yet that which God begins withal, is ſufficient for ſomething, in the way of converſion and thereby man is enabled to do that for which that aſſiſtance is given. And that being made uſe of, God, of his own grace and good will, will give *more*. And this we are well aſſured of by thoſe words of our Saviour, *Mark* iv. 25. *To him that hath ſhall be given*, (that is, that hath by *uſe* and *improvement*, but *from him that hath not* (that is, that doth not make uſe of what God hath given him) *ſhall be taken away, even that which he hath*. But this is moſt certain that *God doth never forſake us firſt*. That good will of God which did incline him to begin with us, when we were in a way of ſin, will move him to go on after he hath begun. For we find in ſcripture, that *God* often *makes himſelf, an argument to himſelf*, *Ezek.* xxxvi. 22. *For my own name ſake I will do this*. So *Iſa.* xliii. 25. *I, even I am he that blotteth out thy tranſgreſſions for my own name ſake*. God here propoſeth himſelf, for an argument to himſelf, and brings

brings this as an argument for a *farther act* becauſe of his own grace and goodneſs he had *begun*. For he will not begin, and leave off upon the ſame terms he did begin, when we were in a ſtate of ſin, and when we were enemies to him by wicked works. He did begin then, when he found us in our blood. It is eaſy for us to believe that God, who of his own accord did begin, when he found us in a *ſtate of ſin*, will not give over and leave us, when he finds us in the motion of *repentance*. And that is the *ſixth* particular, tho' God *begin with leſs, he will go on with more*. And this is a great encouragement for any man to ſet about the work of religion, and to make application to God; becauſe he does not know how far God will enable him in time to come. Juſt as our Saviour ſaid to his diſciples, *when you ſhall be brought before princes and governors, conſider not before hand, what ye ſhall anſwer; for it ſhall be given you in that hour, what ye ſhall ſay*, Mat. x. 18, 19. So that, let no man be diſcouraged, though that which he now hath, be not ſufficient for to carry him through that which he hath before him; for as his work ſhall increaſe and grow greater, God will furniſh him with that aſſiſtance that ſhall be ſuitable, and ſufficient for what he calls himſelf unto.

Seventhly, God ſpeaketh abſolutely, poſitively, and without any reſervation, that when a ſinner *turneth away from his wickedneſs, he ſhall ſave his ſoul alive*. When we have but half a mind, we ſpeak with caution, reſervation, and upon ſuppoſition: but here God ſpeaketh abſolutely, clearly and fully, without

without *if's* or *and's*, that ſo we may ſee his mind, and know what to truſt to. We uſe to doubt of mens performance of their words, if they ſpeak waveringly, and as it were, unwillingly; but thus it is not with God, he ſpeaks freely, and without reſervation. And to aſſure us hereof, we have firſt of all, the excellency of his nature, and ſecondly, his truth and faithfulneſs. Alſo, God loſeth nothing by the ſinner's return to him. When his creature is gained, he accounts it as gain to himſelf; ſo that nothing obſtructs but our own obſtinacy, and unworthy refuſal, and for that we muſt blame ourſelves. *Prov.* i. 24. God ſaith, *Becauſe I have ſtretched out my hand, and ye refuſed; therefore I will laugh at your deſtruction.* It is *God-like*, to take pleaſure in the good of others. We know whoſe nature it is, to take pleaſure in the ruin of others, and who it is that goeth about, ſeeking whom he may devour; even the *devil*, whoſe nature is moſt deformed and degenerate.

Eightly, The repentance of a ſinner, and his turning to God, is a thing ſo acceptable and well-pleaſing to God, that he will greatly reward thoſe that have any hand in it, *Dan.* xii. 3. *They that be wiſe, ſhall ſhine as the brightneſs of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteouſneſs, as the ſtars for ever and ever.* And our Saviour ſaith, there is *joy in heaven, at the converſion of a ſinner*, Luke xv. 7. And if this may be ſaid to be done by us, which are but inſtruments, much more by him that is the principal and chief agent. God himſelf doth ſo much favour and delight in this work of a ſinner's converſion

converſion, that when we ſhall come to know better, how much God was concerned in it, we ſhall think eternity itſelf too ſtrait and too narrow for us to magnify and praiſe ſo good a God, ſo well deſerving at our hands. What encouragement was it for a prodigal ſon, to be ſo kindly received by his father, *Luke* xv. 11. &c.

Now, the *concluſion* of all, is this: ſince, as we have ſeen, ſin is ſo fatal and miſchievous to us, and the condition of every ſinner ſo horrid and lamentable, that is *not* brought to repentance, and into reconciliation with God, and to the law of everlaſting righteouſneſs and truth: ſince, if we are not according to the mind of God, we can never be acceptable to him, nor made happy by him: and ſince God doth afford us his grace and aſſiſtance, let us be encouraged to be up and doing, and ſet ourſelves with all our might to leave off to ſin, and to return to our duty. 'Tis very good news to a ſick man, to tell him that his diſeaſe is not mortal; and to him that is wounded, that his wound is curable; and 'tis no leſs good tidings to ſinners, that we can tell them, that their ſins are pardonable upon their repentance, and that though they have offended God, they may be forgiven, and become acceptable unto him, upon their converſion, through Chriſt's recommendation, and interceſſion. And theſe things make it credible, which I pray conſider.

Firſt, What ſin is, either the act or defect of a *fallible creature*, and ſo reverſible. And that by how much the more we are liable to miſcarry through temptation, by ſo much the more is God willing

to

to receive us upon our repentance and return to him. For this doth abate the ſin of us men in this ſtate of weakneſs and contracted impotency; for our ſin is not like the ſin of the angels, that fell without a tempter, for ought we know.

Secondly, As our act is reverſible, and *made null by our repentance* and ſelf-condemnation, ſo *God hath all right to pardon. Firſt*, as he is lord and *owner* of the creature. *Secondly*, as he is *governor* of the world ſo alſo as he is the firſt and chief *goodneſs*. So that if it doth conſiſt with goodneſs and the honour of his government, a ſinner may be ſure to have it upon the terms of the goſpel. But then you muſt come to God's terms; for otherwiſe it is good to controul wickedneſs and ſin; and it is a righteous thing with God, to render tribulation to thoſe that continue obſtinate.

Thirdly, God *de facto*, *hath* and *will* pardon ſin to the penitent. Such is the excellency of his nature, that he takes delight in it. And I will add one thing more that God concerns himſelf in our affairs and takes care of man; and this hath an univerſal acknowledgment; yea, 'tis the very ſenſe of our natures, and the dictates of our reaſon; as I will ſhew you in theſe inſtances.

1*ſt*. If at any time, we fall into diſtreſs, what comes ſooner out of our mouth, than, *O God, or God help me.*

2*dly*, If we do engage, or undertake any thing wherein there is difficulty; we ſay, *in the name of God.*

3*dly*,

3*dly*, In our narration, all ſober men ſay, *as God would have it.*

4*thly*, In our deprecations of things that are formidable; we ſay, *God forbid.*

5*thly*, In our thankſgivings, we ordinarily ſay, *God be bleſſed*; or, *I thank God.*

6*thly*, In our proteſtations, we ſay, *before God*, or, *as in the preſence of God.*

7*thly*, In our ſalutations, one of another, we ſay, *God be with you*, or, *God keep you.*

And though theſe in the mouths of many men, are formal, and without due conſideration, yet the cuſtom of them does proceed from a very good original, and they ſpeak nature's ſenſe, and ſhew that there is motion in our minds towards God, and ſome ſenſe of him upon our ſpirits.

DISCOURSE XV.

The Converſion of a SINNER.

EZEK. xviii. 27.

When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedneſs that he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right, he ſhall ſave his ſoul alive.

I Have purpoſed, in the *cloſe* of my diſcourſe on this text, to ſpeak to five things.

I. The *time* when the wicked turneth away from his wickedneſs.

II. The *quality* of the perſon; *wicked*. When *the wicked man* turneth away from his wickedneſs.

III. The *motion*; *turneth away from his wickedneſs*.

IV. To give an account of what is *lawful and right*; when the wicked turneth away from his wickedneſs, and *doth that which is lawful and right*.

V. To ſhew the *good effect* of this motion, *he ſhall ſave his ſoul alive*.

I. For the *time* of his converſion and return to God, it is indefinitely ſpoken, and doth not exclude *late time*, which may be an encouragement to every one, be his caſe never ſo deſperate. But then, this is not ſpoken to encourage mens delays and put-offs; for there are four great evils conſequent upon that.

1*ſt*. It were to *ill-reſent* the goodneſs of God, thus to requite his grace and favour, that we continue in ſin, becauſe God is gracious. *God forbid* (ſaith the apoſtle) that we ſhould continue in ſin, becauſe *grace doth abound*, Rom. vi. 1, 2. This would be horrid ingratitude, and diſingenuity.

2*dly*, It were to *abuſe ourſelves*, and do ourſelves more and more harm. For evil is againſt the nature of man; it is ſuch a thing as marrs his nature and ſpoils his principle. Therefore we ſhould never meddle with it, and much leſs continue in it.

3*dly*, It would make the work which is neceſſary to our happineſs, much more *hard and difficult*. For ill uſe doth contract bad habits; and bad habits contracted by long uſe and cuſtom, are with great difficulty left off. This the prophet ſuppoſeth

eth in thoſe words, when he ſaith; can the *black-moor change his skin, or the leopard his ſpots; then they which are accuſtomed to do evil, may learn to do well*, Jer. xiii. 23. Impudence and immodeſty, grow upon thoſe that continue in the practice of iniquity.

4thly, Continuance in ſin doth expoſe us to far greater *danger*.

1. Becauſe of the great uncertainty of life, for who can promiſe himſelf another day, nay, another moment? and

2. Becauſe of the *devil*'s repeated and continued aſſaults, by which he will ſtill get the more advantage upon us; and ſo it will become the more difficult to get him out of poſſeſſion.

3. In reſpect of the inſinuations of *bad company* and converſe. For men that are bad themſelves, will keep ſuch company as themſelves; and company and converſe are of an inſinuating quality, and *that* is done by treaty and converſe, which is not done on a ſudden.

4. All the while you ſtand out, you are in a way of *reſiſtance* of the holy Spirit, and fight againſt the motions of God almighty; which are neceſſary to bring you to good, and to qualify you for eternal life. Let therefore no man think, that he may lead a ſinful life of pleaſure here, and immediately repent, and enter into life. For heaven is rather a *ſtate* than a *place*; and doth require a good temper of mind, to qualify us for the enjoyment of it. And we are ſaid to be ſaved, in the language of ſcripture, when we are delivered from *our ſins*, and qualified for the

enjoyment of God. And there muſt be *ſalvation of grace*, as antecedent to that of *glory*. For happineſs hath its foundation in holineſs, and there muſt be either a conſcience void of offence, by abſolute *innocence*; or eaſe of guilt, by our *repentance*, and *God's pardon*: otherwiſe there is no ſalvation; for, a guilty conſcience hath hell within itſelf. There are many that would be ſaved in a negative ſenſe, that is, they would not be damned; but this is not a juſt explication of ſalvation; for heaven and ſalvation is begun here, and therefore the apoſtle ſaith, *who hath ſaved us and called us*, 2 Tim. i. 9. And ſo much for the firſt particular, the *time* when the wicked turneth away from his wickedneſs.

II. The *quality* of the perſon; *wicked*. And here I muſt acquaint you, that ſcripture doth not denominate perſons *witked*, or *ſinners*, or *workers of iniquity*, from weakneſſes, failings, or from error of judgment, or from indiſpoſition at times, from ſudden paſſion, or ſurpriſal; nor from the irregularity of the firſt motion, that is ſo troubleſome and grievous unto us all. But they are called *ſinners* and *wicked* perſons, who *voluntarily conſent to known iniquity*; who while they have knowledge and judgment of that which is right, for baſe ends and purpoſes act contrary thereunto, and continue in ſin and apoſtacy from the truth. Sins of the former ſort, ſuch as weakneſs and failings, through temptation or ſudden ſurprize, require our modeſty and asking God forgiveneſs: as alſo our greater care and diligence, and conſtant application to God and committing ourſelves into his hand; and in ſo doing,

ing, God doth readily forgive. For he remembers our frame, and conſiders and makes allowance for our weakneſs, *Pſ.* ciii. 13. and *Mal.* iii 17. *As a father pitieth his children, ſo the Lord pitieth thoſe that fear him; and he will ſpare them as a man ſpareth his own ſon that ſerveth him.*

III. I now proceed to the third, to ſhew when a man may be ſaid to *turn* from his wickedneſs; to which enquiry I ſhall anſwer by three negative, and three affirmative propoſitions. The *negatives* are theſe.

1ſt. A man is *not* ſaid to turn away from his iniquities when his ſin rather leaves him than he leaves it: either through age and diſability of body; or through weakneſs and infirmity; ſo that he cannot bear to do as he has formerly done. Now, this is the caſe many times of the *riotous* and intemperate, who uſe to *riſe up early in the morning, that they might follow ſtrong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them*, Iſa. v. 11. But this they cannot do always. Then for the *prodigal*, that profuſely ſpends all that he hath, and is brought to a morſel of bread, and like him that we read of, *Luke* xv. 14. made to feed with the ſwine upon husks; ſuch a man's ſin hath rather left him, than he it. The like may be ſaid of *wanton* laſcivious perſons, that have quite ſpoiled and diſabled their bodies. And alſo of *falſe dealers*, who have been ſo often found out, that no body will truſt them, or have to do with them; you cannot ſay that ſuch men as theſe have turned from their wickedneſs.

2. Such men as are *not at* their own *liberty*; but under tutors and governors, whom they dare not diſobey; who are as it were ſhut up, and not ſuffered to ramble abroad. Theſe men cannot be ſaid to have turned from their wickedneſs.

3. Nor *when ſin is made bitter* to men, by ſuffering the bad conſequences that follow upon it. Sometimes men ſuffer in their names, or in their eſtates, or in their bodies. Guilt doth always propheſy evil things, and ſin is a ſhame and reproach to any perſon that commits it, *Pro.* xxiii. 29. *Who hath wo, who hath ſorrow, who hath contentions, who hath babblings, who hath wounds without cauſe, who hath redneſs of eyes? they that tarry long at the wine; they that go to ſeek new wine.* It is ſaid of lazineſs, idleneſs and ſluggiſhneſs, that it is more painful than induſtry and diligence; and to be employed, is eaſier than to be idle. So it may be ſaid of other vices; the miſchiefs and inconveniencies that follow upon diſſolute living, and naughty practices, are not ballanced by the pleaſure that they bring, but are dearly paid for. Whereas ways of goodneſs and virtue are delightful, and end in peace; as you read, *Pro.* iii. 17. *All her ways are pleaſantneſs, and all her paths are peace.* For the ſeveral virtues, they are ſuitable and connatural; every virtue is according to the nature of man, and agrees with the reaſon of his mind which is the ſuperior and governing principle. As to inſtance, by comparing ſome virtues and vices together. Pride, inſolence, envy, malice, theſe are troubleſome and unnatural: there is no greater torment, or worſe rack, than for a man to live in malice

malice, and bear envy and ill-will. Thoſe that are arrogant and proud, create to themſelves a world of difficulty, beſides much ill-will and diſpleaſure: whereas modeſty, gentleneſs, loving-kindneſs, quietneſs, is according to the nature of man, and creates no trouble or difficulty to a man. But to return to the matter in hand. There is much difference between theſe two; between our leaving of ſin, and its leaving of us; when we do not act from our own principle; but the bitterneſs of ſin appears by its ſufferings, and by this, we are made to deſiſt; in theſe caſes a man cannot be ſaid to return from his wickedneſs. But then *affirmatively*, in three particulars.

1ſt. When we leave ſin out of ſenſe and judgment of its *vileneſs*, and impurity. For all ſin is ſuch in its own nature; and therefore we read, that the ſons of *Eli made themſelves vile by their wickedneſs*, 1 *Sam.* iii. 13. and *Jer.* ii. 19. we read *that it is an evil, and a bitter thing to forſake the Lord our God*. For in morals you muſt know that the ground, motive and reaſon of the action, doth ſpecificate the action, rather than the matter of it. For two perſons may do one and the ſame action; the ſame thing materially may be done; and yet the action may be very different, becauſe of the ground, principle and motive, upon which it was done. This for certain you muſt know, that it is not a virtuous action, if be not done *becauſe* the thing is good, and avoided *becauſe* it is evil. That is the firſt, when we leave ſin, out of ſenſe and judgment of its vileneſs, badneſs and iniquity.

2. When

2. When we leave ſin out of *reſpect to God*, in obedience unto his laws, and love to him. This was the temper found in *Joſeph*; who when ſin was preſented to him, ſaid, *how can I do this wickedneſs, and ſin againſt God*, Gen. xxxix. 9. When it is more to us, to give God an offence, than to expoſe our own lives and libertics. When a man will not deſtroy the cauſe of God, to ſave his own life. Now if it be ſuggeſted, that this is a notion not practicable becauſe God is at ſo great a diſtance, *I anſwer*, it is done out of reſpect to God, when we do a thing becauſe it is juſt, fit and right; becauſe it is good and ought to be. And this is intelligible; for every man knows what is the ground and reaſon of his action; he knows whether he doth it out of a ſenſe of the goodneſs of the thing itſelf, or out of any other reaſon. For man, as a moral agent, is only conſiderable, as to his *end* and *principle*. For God is beſt known to us, by being good, as being the firſt and chiefeſt goodneſs. To do a thing therefore becauſe it is *good*, is to do it out of love to God, and to avoid a thing becauſe it is *evil*, is the ſame as not to do it, becauſe it will give God an offence. And this is an explication of doing a thing out of *love to God*, and out of *reſpect to him*. And I have found this among the philoſophers, that never had the advantage of a bible, who tell us, "That if a-"ny thing be without reſpect to God, it is not an "action of virtue, 1 *Cor.* x. 31, 32. There is nothing in the world better known to us, if we ſink not down by ſenſuality into brutiſhneſs, or by malice into deviliſhneſs, than that there is a God, and

a difference between *good* and *evil*. Theſe we are all *made* to know, and herein we may not fail. Whoſoever doth not know theſe things, it is matter of his ſhame, and a ſign that he hath greatly neglected himſelf. For who doth not know that it is better for a man to live in love and good-will than to live in malice, envy, hatred, *&c.* Who doth not know, it is better for a man to be ſober, juſt and temperate, than to be wanton and laſcivious? For a man to govern himſelf according to nature and reaſon, than for to abuſe himſelf? Who doth not know, that it is better to honour God, and to give him thanks, than to blaſpheme him? That is the ſecond, when we leave ſin out of *judgment* and ſenſe of its filthineſs and baſeneſs, when we do our duty out of reſpect to God, and in obedience to his laws, and love to him.

3. A man cannot be ſaid to return from his wickedneſs, unleſs he doth conceive diſpleaſure at it and reſolve never to have to do with it again. Thus when a man leaves ſin, with diſplacency and abhorrence; he may be ſaid to turn away from it, otherwiſe it is but forbearance for a while, upon ſome reaſon, and as a matter of prudence, like that of *Felix*, *Acts* xxiv. 25. *God ſpeaks peace unto his people, but let them not return again to folly*, as the Pſalmiſt hath it, *Pſal.* lxxxv. 8. If a man do not continue in a good courſe, it cannot be ſaid that he is turned from his wickedneſs, nor that it proceeded from the change of his nature, but was rather a ſuſpenſion, than a diſlike of his former ways. They that *love the Lord*, and do ſincerely turn to him, *hate evil*

Pſal.

Pſal. xcvii. 10. We muſt not only depart from evil, and do good, but we *muſt hate evil*, as the apoſtle directs, *Rom.* xii. 9. *We muſt abhor evil, and cleave unto that which is good.* This is the third particular, when men leave their ſins out of *diſplacency*, and take offence at them; otherwiſe it may be forbearance upon ſome prudential account, but doth not amount to *turning away from their wickedneſs*. So that you ſee this alteration is by the motion of the mind and underſtanding; and is made by the choice of the will; the mind is changed, and other judgment is made, ſo that this man differs from himſelf. As a man differs that was in a deadly diſeaſe, and is reſtored; ſo doth a man differ from himſelf, after he leaves ſin, and doth return to his duty. And ſo much for the third thing, when a man may be ſaid to return from his wickedneſs.

IV. In the next place, I am to give you an account of *lawful and right*. *When the wicked man turns away from his wickedneſs, and doth that which is lawful and right.* Here are two words for one and the ſame thing; and the one is explicatory of the other. Now, this is that which we all ought to do; and there is no pretence of power and privilege to the contrary. And if every body did confine himſelf to that which is right, juſt and fit, we ſhould have a *new world*; and there would be nothing of wrong or hard meaſure found among us; we ſhould then be the better one for another. But here is the miſchief, ſome go beyond their bounds and do not confine themſelves to that which is *lawful* and *right*; which are but two words for the ſame thing.

Right

Right gives rule to the *law*, and the *law* doth declare what is right; and it is not a *law* if it be unrighteous and unjust. This must be true of all *human* laws; for I am sure it is true of all the laws of *God*. The psalmist says, *Psal.* cxix. 172. *Thy thy law is right*; that is, it is as it should be: for *right* is the boundary of *power* and *privilege*: for it is not *power*, if it be not in communion with right and truth; for God declares that his *throne is established in righteousness*, Prov. xxv. 5. It is not power to be able to do that which ought not to be done; for ungoverned appetite is not power but weakness. It is not power to do evil, but impotency, weakness and deformity. *Free-will*, which we so much contend for, and brag so much of, it is no glorious perfection, and we need not be so proud of it. For free-will, as it includes a power to do wrong as well as right, is not to be found in God himself; and therefore it is no perfection in us. For this is true of God, that all his ways are ways of righteousness, goodness and truth; and there is not in him a power to do otherwise than is just and right. And if we were *God-like*, as we should be, the *fruit of the spirit in us* would be *in all righteousness, goodness and truth*, Eph. v. 9. If *this* were the religion of the world, where would be revenge, malice, spite, and and doing wrong one to another? And as God *doth* that in all cases, which is just, fit, right and good, so doth he require of us, nothing but what is just, right, fit and good: and this he doth require of us, under the promise of a reward, tho' it is our duty so to do, and our righteousness to be found in such

ſuch ways. And God prohibits us nothing that is right and good; and whereſoever he doth impoſe a law upon us, he ſhews us that it is fit for us to be reſtrained, and ſhews us that his laws are eaſy and profitable for us. I am not far from the opinion of thoſe men that think the prohibition laid upon *Adam* in paradiſe, was not ſo much to ſhew his power, as monitory; that the fruit was not good for man, and would do him harm if he meddled with it. If it be ſo, then it doth take off that, which ſome men think doth reflect upon the divine goodneſs. But for this let him receive it that ſees cauſe.

Now if it be ſo, that God commands nothing but what is reaſonable, juſt and fit, and prohibits nothing but what is noxious to us, and for our hurt and prejudice; then how comes it to paſs, that we, ſorry, impotent creatures, pretend to power and priviledge, otherwiſe than what is right and juſt, or for the beſt? How comes it to paſs that we are ſo addicted to ſet up will for a rule, and for a law; a will contrary to God, and to the reaſon of the thing, which is a law antecedent to the very creation? For upon this ſuppoſition, that God will make ſuch a creature as man, the *reaſon of things* requires that he ſhould be made under ſuch a law, and under ſuch obligations. For if God do make a creature that is voluntary and intelligent; we muſt leave him to the direction of his faculties, otherwiſe he ſhould controul his own workmanſhip. Now will is no rule at all, nor gives any warrant: the laws of nature ought not to be varied from; that is, *what is reaſon, what is right and fit.* Will ſtands

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for nothing, in disjunction from reaſon and right. There is nothing gives more offence, than for a man proudly and malpertly to ſay, *he will, becauſe he will.* Our apprehenſions of right, are regulated by the nature of things; and we have a lie in our minds, if we act otherwiſe. For *truth is firſt in things*, and *then* is the *truth* in our *underſtandings*. Truth lies in our regularity and conformity with our apprehenſion of the reaſon of things: and I am therefore in the truth, becauſe I conceive of things as they are. But *things* give law to notion and apprehenſion. This is a gallant theme that I am upon, and a more generous argument there is not under the ſun; and that which would tend to the ſettlement of the world, and every body in their dues and right.

But a man may philoſophiſe never ſo well in generals; if he do not bring down things to particulars, it will not do. Now therefore go along with me, and I will particulariſe this in notion and caſes.

There is a rule of right in all caſes, and 'tis the *charge* of all perſons in the uſe of power, to judge and determine according unto that rule. And *he* is weak that cannot judge what is the right of the caſe; and wicked, that for ends and purpoſes will vary from it. Now that there is a rule of right in all caſes, I will ſhew you in particular inſtances. And

1ſt. I will begin with the relation that is between *parents* and *children*, and ſhew you what is right for parents to do with their children, and children to their parents. *1ſt.* For the parent, who is, in a ſort,

ſort, in the order of God to the children; as being next after God, the cauſe of their being and original; yet he muſt not behave himſelf any way, nor after *any faſhion*, towards his children. For it is ſaid, *fathers provoke not your children to wrath.* He muſt deal with them tenderly, and in a way of reaſon, and not juſtly give them offence, or provoke them. This is the *right of the caſe* between *fathers* and *children.* Then for the *child*, he muſt obey his parents in all things, and muſt do as he is bidden, ſo there be nothing unreaſonable or evil in it.

2. I go to the relation of *husbands* and *wives*; there is the right of the caſe between them. For the *husband*, that in ſome things hath the ſuperiority, and is the firſt mover, yet, *Col.* iii. 19. we read that the husband *muſt not be bitter againſt his wife*; nor give her an offenſive word, nor uſe any hard language; but lead her on fairly, by reaſon; and ſatisfy her by argument, and in a fair way. And this is the *right of the caſe*, as to that. Then he ought to give her *honour*, as *the weaker veſſel*, and give her the advantage of her ſex, as you read, 1 *Pet.* iii. 7. Then for the *right of the caſe*, as to the *wife* towards her *husband*: the wifes converſation towards her husband, ought to be ſuch as to gain upon him, ſuppoſing that he be not in all things as he ought, as that if he be froward and hard to pleaſe, the wifes converſation ought to be endearing, that ſo ſhe may thereby gain upon him, and bring him to temper, 1 *Pet.* iii. 1.

3. Then for *maſters* and *ſervants*. *Maſters render to your ſervants what is right*, that which is equal, fair,

fair and reaſonable. Do not uſurp over men, do not uſe them as if they were irrational creatures, but as thoſe that are of the ſame ſpecies and kind with themſelves, *not uſing threatning words, but remembering that they have a maſter in heaven, and that there is no reſpect of perſons with him.* Then for ſervants, there is the *right of the caſe* for them alſo, and that is to *obey their maſters in all things*, and to be true and faithful to them. And to this in the converſion ſaid of his ſervants; to one he ſaid *go*, and he went; and to another *come*, and he came. Thus in ſhort given you the *right of the caſe* in theſe three relations of parents and children, maſters and wives, maſter and ſervant.

Then in our *common converſe*, we ought to uſe all humanity, courteſy and civility, giving all reſpects, deſpiſing no body. We ought not in words to undervalue any man in company, as to make him leſs his ſenſe. For I would never come into that man's company, that I would not hear all ſenſe. Thus we muſt be ready to render a reaſon to every man that demandeth it, 1 *Pet.* iii 15. Then for our carriage towards the *poor*, the *right of the caſe* is the wiſe *Eccleſiaſticus* iv. 4. we *muſt not turn away from a poor man*, but hear him ſpeak and give him a fair anſwer if you cannot anſwer his requeſt. Thus is every able to the counſel of the *fear of God*, viz. *Let it not grieve thee, to have done good unto the poor*, and *to give him an anſwer with meekneſs*.

4. To deſcend to the creatures below us, there is a *right of the caſe* here alſo. We muſt not abuſe any of thoſe creatures below us. For *a righteous man*,

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the *righteous man takes care of his beaſt* : we muſt not abuſe ſo much as our horſe or our dog. By theſe you ſee, that there is in all times and caſes the *rule of right*, which is to do as the caſe requires toward all perſons, in all times, and in all caſes. What is reaſon, what is right, what is fit? even as we ourſelves would be done to, were we in thoſe circumſtances. And it is a man's underſtanding, to find out what *that is* ; and his uprightneſs and integrity, to do *accordingly*.

Now if this be true, 'tis adviſeable that a man be *habituated* and well prepared, that he may not be at a loſs. If a man have pre-conſidered, and examined and been well adviſed before hand ; when any caſe comes, he is prepared, and ſo he will be ready to do as *the right of the caſe* requires. Whereas if he be otherwiſe, he will be at a loſs, and not know what to do when he comes to act. It is haphazard whether he will do right, or wrong: and ſo will not act like a man of prudence, and virtue. For this I muſt tell you, paſſion and ſelf-will, are no principle of action ; by theſe we are never to act, nor to warrant any thing we do. For he that doth this, acts not like a man, but like a fury ; he doth not act according to the principle of reaſon, but like a mad man. The great iniquity in this inferior world, is this, that men aſſume to themſelves to do becauſe they *will*, which is a very great tranſgreſſion, and the higheſt exorbitancy of extravagant creatures. For a man to do *becauſe he will*, or becauſe he hath a mind, alas, this is nothing to any man elſe. What is this man's mind, to another

ther man? for he expects to be dealt with, according to reaſon and the right of the caſe. There are ſome men that are ſo governed by this rule that a man may know how they will act in any caſe; but thoſe *arbitrary* men are men that live in a humour or paſſion, and no man knows where to have them, or what they will do.

DISCOURSE XVI.

The Converſion of a SINNER.

EZEK. xviii. 27.

When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedneſs that he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right, he ſhall ſave his ſoul alive.

THE foregoing truth I have declared with great aſſurance unto you, and I am confident nothing in God's creation can ſtand up in oppoſition to this noble and generous notion. And could I but faſten this upon the world, I ſhould mend the world: for reformation muſt begin *from within*, from the better information of mens minds, before ever their actions will be well directed and governed.

But here ſome one may riſe up and ſay, may I not *pleaſe my own mind?*

Yes, thou may'ſt pleaſe thyſelf *in materia libera*; that is, in matters of thy own right; where no bo-

dy elſe hath any demand of right. Where the matter is wholly free and indifferent, as whether a man will ride or go on foot: in which, and a thouſand other things of like nature, he doth no body any injury. Or,

Where it is only a man's own right, and no other man hath any demand upon him, there a man may pleaſe his own mind, without any offence to God, or injury to men. But otherwiſe, if I have not the *ſole* right, but another hath a demand, then this of pleaſing a man's ſelf, or doing according to his own mind, muſt be excluded, and ſhut out of doors. I ſay, where the reaſon of the thing is contrary, or others have a demand of right, there a man's own mind is no warrant. Therefore this is that I reſolve upon, where-ever a man hath authority, or a lawful uſe, I would always have him have reaſon go along with the uſe of his authority; and then he will have a great ſatisfaction that doth command; and *others* will eaſily and readily obey. For a man loves to ſee reaſon for what he doth; and then a man's commands are juſtified, when reaſon runs along with his will and pleaſure. And he that obeys, will find it mighty eaſy to obey reaſon; but it is horribly troubleſome to do without reaſon, and ſtill worſe to do againſt it. To obey without reaſon, is to be led like beaſts, and the nature of man will be impatient under it: for this is that which all men call for, *do me reaſon, do me right*, and when this is done men are ſatisfied. And this no man ſhould deny; for God himſelf hath given reaſon for the rule of action and law of right. And 'tis

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the very ſelf-ſame thing for a man to obſerve God and fulfil his will, and to do that which reaſon doth require. For right is determined by its agreeableneſs with the *reaſon of things*; and things are driven by force and violence, that are not done with reaſon: and therefore will return back again, as ſoon as that force is taken off. As if by power you bend a ſtick, it will return to its ſtraightneſs, as ſoon as that force is taken off. If you draw a bow by ſtrength never ſo much, it will return to its former latitude, when the hand is taken off. Things will not hold long, if under force and violence; but if they be according to the right of the caſe, and according to reaſon, they will hold when they are done. And this is that which God expects, that a wicked man ſhould *turn from his wickedneſs, and do that which is lawful and right*; by which *he ſhall ſave his ſoul alive*. Which brings me

V. To the *beneficial part* of the words, the happineſs that follows upon renovation, repentance, and turning to God. He that doth ſo, ſhall *ſave his ſoul alive*. Where you have the principal part put for the whole: not that the body ſhall be neglected; for God that takes care of oxen, will take care of it alſo. He ſhall ſave his *ſoul* alive; not as if we were not to look upon the ſoul as immortal: but this is the account I give of that. Miſery is worſe than death: to live, is to be well and in good health. I am fully ſatisfied, that it is better not to be at all than to be miſerable; and for this I will take our Saviour's warrant *Mat.* xxvi. 24. where he ſaith, *that it had been good for that man if he had not*

been born, that ſhould betray the ſon of God. And the apoſtle tells us, of the woman that liveth in wantonneſs, that ſhe is *dead even whilſt ſhe liveth.* If any man be under guilt, he is dead while alive. Whoſoever doth amiſs, doth abuſe himſelf, and wrong his own ſoul: and he that doth continue in ill doing, doth take a courſe finally to undo himſelf. It is the caſe of us men, even of us, ſometimes in life to have done amiſs, and to have perverted our way. But thanks be to God, through the grace of the goſpel, there is a way of recovery: repentance is a plank after ſhipwreck, whereby a man may ſave himſelf; we are therefore not to deſpair; but to turn from our wickedneſs; and we have God's declaration and promiſe that we ſhall *ſave our ſouls alive.* 'Tis a great word, but God hath ſpoken it, and ſhall not he make it good? *He ſhall ſave his ſoul alive*, Ezek. xviii. 27. It is God that hath ſpoken it, in whoſe hands are the iſſues of life and death, who hath power to kill and to make alive. In the five books of *Moſes* you have often theſe words *that ſoul ſhall be cut off from among his people:* that is the puniſhment ſhall be inflicted by the hand of God himſelf. And therefore it is ſaid to be *a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living* God. This ſometimes, yea, very often, is the caſe of thoſe which ſin ſo ſecretly, that they eſcape the cognizance of men. But the more are ſuch men in danger of falling by the hand of God; if by the ſecretneſs of the fact, the judgment of man cannot lay hold of it. For this is moſt certain, that none ſhall finally prevail in wickedneſs: *though hand join in hand*

hand, yet the wicked ſhall not go unpuniſhed, Prov xi. 21. And where the hand of the magiſtrate, either becauſe of power or ſecrecy, cannot reach, God himſelf will judge in thoſe caſes; and he will proceed according as things are. Though before men not to be proved, and not to be, are the ſame thing yet God ſearcheth the heart, and he cannot be deceived. God hath given us double ſecurity for our lives, and we have juſt expectation from both: the firſt is from innocence, for God made us in his own image. But becauſe we have failed, here is a ſecond proviſion that God hath made by the motion of repentance, and this is God's after-grant. The firſt was the ſtate of God's creation: the next was that of reſtoration, and recovery by repentance, which is declared by the goſpel. So that now having loſt our innocence, let us look after ſalvation by the motion of repentance, which through God's grace is ſufficient, and will be effectual to prevent puniſhment: which is the true explication of *remiſſion of ſins*. For if ſin be committed, no power can make that not to have been done. Nor, ſecondly, if a thing hath been done amiſs, can it be made not to be worthy of puniſhment. But the forgiveneſs of ſin doth prevent the deſerved puniſhment of ſin. Therefore, ſince we have all of us loſt the ſnow-like whiteneſs of innocence, which was the beauty of our creation: let us now look after that whiteneſs which is by blood. For ſo you have the expreſſion in the *Revelations*: that they were *waſhed white in the blood of the lamb*, Rev. vii. 14. The faith of the Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* conjoined with our repen-

repentance and reformation, is now the only way to obtain pardon and forgiveneſs. Now unleſs a man repent, he cannot be ſenſible of the impurity of the act, nor of his danger thereby; and till this be done, he will not ſeek after his remedy, no more than a man will ſeek after a phyſician, that is not ſenſible of his diſeaſe, nor of his danger by means thereof. No man will go to *Chriſt* for pardon, unleſs he be ſenſible of the evil of ſin and of which he doth repent, and condemn himſelf, and reſolve againſt it; for no true penitent doth allow himſelf in ſin.

But farther, *ſhall ſave his ſoul alive.* From this we may underſtand of how great benefit the good uſe and improvement of our *time* is. Time, though it be of the ſlendereſt entity, yet 'tis of the moſt moral conſideration, becauſe improveable to the higheſt advantage. Our time is a day of grace, for we are in a probation ſtate: ſo that now it fairly lies before us, to make ourſelves happy for ever. And we may alſo by the abuſe of the grace of God, undo ourſelves for ever. Therefore I ſay unto you in the words of Moſes, *Deut.* xxx 19. *I ſet before you this day life and death, bleſſing and curſing, chooſe life.* For when a *wicked man turneth away from his wickedneſs that he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right, he ſhall ſave his ſoul alive.* But if he continue in wickedneſs, he ſhall *ſurely die.*

How many are there that overlook the buſineſs, purpoſe and intention of life! We are here to run a race, and ſo to run that we may obtain: and therefore we are to watch over ourſelves, both as

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to the things of our mind, and body; and ſo to keep under our bodies, and bring them into ſubjection, that we may not ruin and undo ourſelves. Now this is another thing, than to gratify our ſenſe, and live in a humour. No, no, we muſt run the race that is ſet before us, and as thoſe that ſtrain for the maſtery, muſt be temperate in all things. This is our buſineſs, to ſerve the intereſt of our ſouls, in the ſtate that is before us. Therefore I adviſe every man that is ſerious, to ask himſelf theſe queſtions.

1*ſt.* Will this that I have done, or am doing, be accountable, when God ſhall call me to a reckoning? When any thing doubtful is propoſed, or of a bad quality, then ask this queſtion; ſhall I be able to give an account for this, when I ſhall ſtand before the tribunal ſeat of Chriſt? The

2*d.* Queſtion is that which *Abigail* put to *David* 1 *Sam.* xxv. 31. *This will be no grief of heart, nor offence unto thee.*

3*d.* Queſtion is, what ſhall I think of this, when I ſhall lie upon my death bed? What judgment of apprehenſion ſhall I have of it then? The

4*th.* Queſtion is, how remedileſs will the conſequence of evil be, when I ſhall have the leaſt relief by my reaſon, and be leaſt capable of advice; and when I ſhall have the leaſt aſſiſtance of God's grace and Spirit? How ſhall I be then able to bear up againſt the intolerable burthen of evil and guilt too? Let us conſider that we die daily in a threefold reſpect; in reſpect of age, in reſpect of diſeaſes, and in reſpect of hazard and danger. In reſpect of age,

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we grow nearer and nearer unto death: and in reſpect of diſeaſes, which is death in ſome degree: and laſtly in reſpect of hazard and danger from abroad. For whoſoever neglects God and the law, may be maſter of any body's life. How will men ſatisfy themſelves, that take ſo little care how they paſs out of time, into eternity? That live and die in ſuch a frame and temper, which is altogether unfit for the buſineſs and employment of eternity? For if we expect to be happy, and to attend upon God, and holy angels, and ſaints in glory; it is neceſſary that we free ourſelves from all impurity and by holineſs of life qualify ourſelves for the enjoyment of God. For our Saviour hath told us, that unleſs we be converted, and become as little children, that are innocent and harmleſs, that may ſuffer wrong, but will do none, we cannot enter into heaven. Theſe three things do utterly unqualify a man for the ſtate of glory and happineſs.

1. Earthlineſs, worldlineſs, and carnality.
2. A ſpirit of malice, ill-will, and revenge.
3. Pride, arrogancy, and haughtineſs.

1. *Earthlineſs*, worldlineſs, and carnality. The pſalmiſt tells us, *Pſal.* xvii. 11. That worldly men *have their portion in this life.* They being unqualified for the ſtate of eternity.

2. Then for thoſe that live in the ſpirit of envy, *malice*, and ill-will. They have the very ſpirit and temper of the *devil*, who goes about ſeeking whom he may devour.

3. And for pride: the apoſtle *Jude* tells us, that this was the very temper of the angels that fell, that

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kept not their firſt ſtate, but through pride and arrogance, did aſſume to themſelves.

But to draw to a *concluſion*. Since now we have ſuch a declaration as this in the text, which contains the fulneſs of goſpel knowledge: that *when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedneſs, and doth that which is lawful and right, he ſhall ſave his ſoul alive*. Let us entertain good thoughts of God, let us have right apprehenſions of him in our minds always think ſo of God, as to encourage our application to him. And never think that he is implacable; but that he is ready to forgive, and is no hard maſter, nor difficult to pleaſe, nor backward to forgive. Yea, I will ſay more, that God is ſuch a friend to our ſouls, and takes ſuch delight in our converſion and turning to him, that he will not be wanting on his part, to afford us what is neceſſary, for our enablement and encouragement. And ſhould we think otherwiſe of God, we ſhould fret in our minds againſt him, and ſit down in diſcontent and deſpair: juſt as you have an account in *Rev.* ix. 6. of ſome that blaſphemed God becauſe of their pains. This was the temper of *Cain*, who ſaid, *my ſin is greater than can be forgiven*. By this a man doth put himſelf quite out of the way of forgiveneſs.

I add, that it is the ſpecial and genuine effect of the mercy of God to bring ſinners to repentance. But by every evil act that a man doth commit, his recovery is the more difficult; becauſe ſin doth put a man quite out of temper, and ſets him at the greater diſtance from God. For ſin hardens a man's heart, and ſpoils the modeſty of intellectual nature, and much

much more diſpoſeth a man for evil, than he was before.

Now in the cloſe of all, I will reinforce the advice of the text, that the *wicked turn from his wickedneſs*. And let us not herein be miſtaken, for we ought in nothing more to underſtand ourſelves aright; becauſe it is the caſe of life and death. Therefore in theſe caſes, as I told you, men cannot be ſaid to forſake their ſins, when *ſin* rather leaves them, than they their ſins; when his turning from ſin ariſeth rather from abroad than from himſelf, and is rather the effect of his company, and thoſe that have power over him. You cannot ſay that men turn from their wickedneſs, when 'tis not their own motion, nor what they would do if free and left to themſelves. Nor when a man out of fear of former ſufferings, doth not do as formerly he did. For you muſt know, that all vice and wickedneſs is firſt contrary to the reaſon of our minds; and ſecondly, to the health of our bodies: for by ſin and wickedneſs men lay the foundation of aches and diſeaſes, and ſhorten their days. In theſe caſes a man *cannot* be ſaid to turn from his ſins: but in the other caſes which I named, a man *may* be ſaid to turn from his wickedneſs.

Firſt, When the wicked man loaths his ſin out of *ſenſe* and judgment *of the baſeneſs* and vileneſs of it. For the motion, ground, and principle of an action, doth ſpecificate the action. And you cannot upon a moral account, eſtimate an action from the materiality of it, but from the intention, motion, ground, and principle from which it doth proceed;

ceed. And it is reaſon in intellectual nature and choice, that makes it an action of virtue.

Secondly, When we avoid ſin and evil out of *reſpect to God*, becauſe we will not give him an offence. For this is religion, to have the *fear of God* before our eyes: and 'tis but the religion of a heathen, to avoid ſin upon any other account. Now becauſe God is inviſible, if any ſhould ask how he might know what he doth, is with reſpect to God: you may know by that which is materially the ſame with it. To do a thing becauſe it is conſonant to reaſon and to avoid a thing becauſe it is contrary to reaſon, is materially the ſame as to do, or forbear with reſpect to God. And I will make this out, becauſe two things are matter of eaſy knowledge, and the great things of religion.

1*ſt*. That there is a *God*. And,

2*dly*. That there is a difference between *good and evil*. And if we have not ſunk ourſelves into brutiſhneſs, by ſenſuality, or into deviliſhneſs, by malice, envy, and ill-will; a man cannot be ignorant of either of theſe.

That there is a *God* every man muſt grant, becauſe he did not call himſelf into being out of nothing. This is plain, becauſe he cannot continue himſelf in that being which he hath. For to call a thing into being out of nothing, is an act of much greater power, than to continue a being that we have.

And for the difference of *good* and *evil*, nothing is more knowable. Will not every man grant, that there is great difference between living in ſobriety and

and temperance, and living in luxury and wantonneſs; that the one is far better than the other? That it is better for a man to govern his paſſion, and to be affable and courteous, than to be furious, inſolent, arrogant, and tumultuous?

But *thirdly* and laſtly, a man may be ſaid to turn from his wickedneſs, when he conceives diſpleaſure againſt it, and fully purpoſes never to return to it again, whatſoever temptations or provocations he may meet withal. Otherwiſe it may be but only forbearance of the act; unleſs a man withdraws from it through diſlike, and take up reſolutions never to do the like. Now if the wicked man do thus *turn* away *from his wickedneſs, and doth that which is lawful and right, he ſhall ſave his ſoul alive.*

DISCOURSE XVII.

The true Valuation of MAN.

LUKE xvi. 25.

But Abraham ſaid, ſon, remember that thou in thy lifetime receiveſt thy good things, and likewiſe Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

WHether this were a ſtory, or a parable, I will not diſpute or determine. It will be all one as to our inſtruction; for our rule is, *compariſons make facts*; hiſtory contains matter of fact, and parables are repreſentations only; therefore

fore every thing in parables is not to be obſerved, for ſome things are put in for decorum's ſake, and to make it look like a hiſtory. All things in parables that make an appearance, are not intended therefore there is great caution to be uſed, and if there be any point of religion, or any matter of faith grounded upon a parable, it muſt alſo have other foundation. For parables and ſimilitudes are rather for illuſtration, than confirmation.

But, before I come to ſpeak to the words themſelves, I will a little look back, and gloſs upon the verſes precedent.

Ver. 19. *There was a certain rich man which was cloathed in purple and fine linen, and fared ſumptuouſly every day.*

Ver. 20. *And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate full of ſores,* &c.

Upon theſe two verſes I obſerve the different diſpoſition of providence, as to mens eſtate and affairs: one rich, over-rich; the other poor, miſerably poor. For this, you need not look after any other account, but refer it to God's ſovereignty and good pleaſure. For neither doth the one make a man certainly happy, nor the other truly miſerable.

21. *And deſiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table; moreover, the dogs came and licked his ſores.*

Hereupon I obſerve, that it is highly commendable in every one, to comply with the neceſſity of his condition, and to ſupply himſelf as he lawfully may, and to be contented with his lot and portion,

and

and to make as good a ſhift as he can, and to go through this world as well as he may. Thus did the poor man; for his diet, he was content with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table, and for his phyſick, he was content that the dogs ſhould lick his ſores.

22. *And it came to paſs that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's boſom: the rich man alſo died and was buried.*

From hence I obſerve, that all ſorts of men die: and after death a great difference. The rich man had all the advantages that this world could afford, of him it is ſaid, that he died and was buried. The poor man died alſo, but we have nothing of his funeral: the world had no ſuch kindneſs for him. But where this world ends, a better world begins. For, though it is not ſaid the beggar was buried, yet it is ſaid that he was carried into *Abraham's* boſom; and that by Gods meſſengers, the angels.

Ver. 23. *And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torment, and ſeeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his boſom.*

Theſe words declare a future ſtate, and the exiſtence of the ſoul after the body moulders away and tumbles into the duſt.

Ver. 24. *And he cried and ſaid, father Abraham have mercy on me, and ſend Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.*

From whence I obſerve, that there is no great hope or expectation for bad men, in the future ſtate. See how little he asks; *ſend Lazarus that he may dip*

dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue. One would think that it was but a ſmall requeſt; yet we do not read that it was granted him. Wherefore, there is very little hope or expectation for bad men in the future ſtate.

Ver. 25. *But Abraham ſaid, ſon, remember that thou in thy-time receiveds't thy good things, and likewiſe Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.*

From which words I obſerve theſe things in general.

Firſt, That *Abraham* gives *reaſon* for what he ſaith; therefore we ſhould not take upon us to dictate and impoſe on others, but it becomes us to ſhew cauſe and to ſatisfy men by reaſon and argument: and this is the direction of the apoſtle, who charges it upon chriſtians, to be ready to render a reaſon of the hope that is in them.

Secondly, Where we reprove, we ſhould uſe *good language*; we ſee here *Abraham* ſaith, *ſon*; though the man was in a deplorable ſtate, yet *Abraham* gives him no hard language. *Son remember that thou in thy life-time had'ſt thy good things.* He rubs up his memory, and reproves him by reaſon: and thus we ought to reſolve, neither to provoke others, nor be provoked ourſelves: and this would tend to the quiet of the world, Let us not provoke any one, for there is ſome good nature in every body: but if you provoke any man, you put him to act upon the worſt principle. Neither be you provoked, for then you are not ſure of yourſelf; for in this caſe a man loſes ſelf-government; for every man in a

paſſion

paſſion is leſs himſelf, if he do not wholly loſe himſelf.

Thirdly, I obſerve, that the poor man who is commended, he is diſtinguiſhed by his name: but for the rich man who is diſparaged, there is *no name* for him. From whence I obſerve, that prudence and caution are to be uſed, where men reprove and diſparage: reprove with concealment forbear names and perſons; convince by reaſon and argument. *Lazarus* who is commended is named: but for the rich man who is diſparaged, there is no name for him.

Again, we are to underſtand, that it is neither a virtue to be poor, nor a ſin to be rich. The explication muſt be, that thou did'ſt uſe thy good things for pride and voluptuouſneſs &c; and *this* is the condemnation of the rich man; not ſimply that he was rich, but that he uſed his riches for pride and luxury; and not for inſtruments of virtue.

Likewiſe Lazarus evil things. That is, thoſe evil things in the courſe of this life, did attain the peaceable fruits of righteouſneſs and virtue, a ſubmiſſion to God, and ſelf-ſurrender.

It is a miſtake to think that poverty is a ſtate of perfection, or any ways meritorious, for we are neither recommended, nor diſparaged to God, by either; and both ſtates have their temptations; the rich, to inſolency; and the poor to baſeneſs. If the poor man be ſurly, he gains no advantage by his poverty; and if the rich man be haughty, he had better have been without his riches. The rich man was not diſadvantaged becauſe he *had* his good things

things in this life, but becauſe he did not well *uſe* them: and the poor man was not rewarded for his poverty, but becauſe it was ſubjoined with ſubmiſſion to God's providence.

But theſe things I only hint by the by. In the words you have theſe three things repreſented.

1*ſt*. In this life, under the managery of ordinary providence, the worſt men may abound with the good things of this world, when better men are ſtraitned, and want even the neceſſary conveniencies of life.

2*ly*. If we would take a right eſtimate of man, we muſt not only conſider him in reſpect of the preſent ſtate, but alſo of the future.

3*ly*. The ſtate of man in the world to come holds a proportion with ſomething of him here: the temper of his mind, the frame of his ſpirit, the courſe of his actions.

1*ſt*. In this life, under the managery of ordinary providence, the worſt men may abound with the good things of this life, and better men are ſometimes ſhortned, and want even the neceſſary conveniencies of life. Of this I ſhall ſpeak but a word, becauſe it is a matter of eaſy obſervation. This *David*, *Job*, and *Jeremiah* ſtumbled at. The pſalmiſt tells us, *Pſal.* xvii. 14. That there are men that have *their portion in this life*; and that good men are oftentimes in want and neceſſity, while theſe are in plenty themſelves, and leave their ſubſtance to their children. So *Pſal.* lxxiii. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. *I was envious at the fooliſh, when I ſaw the proſperity of the wicked. For there are no bands in their death, but*

their ſtrength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued like other men. Therefore pride compaſſeth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment. Their eyes ſtand out with fatneſs. They have more than heart could wiſh. The like you have, *Jer.* xii. 1. *Righteous art thou, O Lord when I plead with thee: yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments; wherefore doth the way of the wicked proſper? wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherouſly?*

This is the ſhort account that I would give of this matter: that the adminiſtration of the things of this life, doth not at all belong to the *kingdom of Chriſt*; but they come from another hand. To make a man to be a rightful owner, he muſt prove his title, either from deſcent, from ſome that were before him; or by a fair and lawful acquiſition, by his good employment and improvement of his ſtock and talent in ſome honeſt way, and that he *hath* not got his wealth by violence, fraud, or coſenage: for this is a maxim with us (and they are diſturbers of the world that go upon any other ground) *that right property and title are founded in nature, not in grace.* God gave the world and the things thereof unto the ſons of men. If I would prove this to be mine, I muſt prove my title, not by miracle; but as the law and uſage of the country where I dwell do ſtate and determine: therefore I will ſay no more in this particular.

2*ly.* This particular is of great importance: If we will take a right eſtimate of man, we muſt conſider him alſo in reſpect of another ſtate; for leſs of

of him is here, and more in another world. That which is moſt a man's own, may be leaſt in worldly appearance. And

3*ly*. The ſtate of men in the world to come, holds a proportion to mens ſpirits and temper, to the tenour of their lives and actions. And this is clear from the text, *ſon, remember, thou in thy life-time receivedſt thy good things, and Lazarus, evil things; wherefore he his comforted, and thou art tormented.*

Not that we are to ſuppoſe that it is either a virtue, to be poor; or a ſin, to be rich: therefore we muſt ſupply theſe words from the *context*, and take the ſenſe of them to be this: ſon, thou in thy life-time, *had'ſt* thy good things; and did'ſt *uſe* them to luxury, exceſs, and riot, pride, haughtineſs, and ſcornfulneſs; and did'ſt not uſe them, as inſtruments to virtue, and arguments to thankfulneſs: whereas a man ſhould honour God with his ſubſtance, and the rich in this world ſhould be *rich in good works; and not high minded, nor truſt in uncertain riches, but in the living God.* The want hereof was condemnation of the rich man, not that he *was* rich, but that he did *uſe* his wealth to pride and luxury; not as inſtruments of virtue, and arguments to gratitude.

So on the other ſide: *thou in thy life-time receivedſt thy good things, and Lazarus evil things; therefore he is comforted.* Not that he was therefore comforted, becauſe he was poor in this world, and did receive evil things here; but becauſe thoſe evil things he received in the courſe of his life, did attain *the peaceable fruits of righteouſneſs*, as the apoſtle

ſpeaks, *Heb.* xii. 11. They put him upon the exerciſe of thoſe virtues that his condition required; that is, ſubmiſſion to God, and ſelf-ſurrender, and acquieſcence in the diſpenſation of providence. For that is a fancy which the *papiſts* go upon, that the ſtate of regular obedience, and ſingle life, and poverty, are virtues in themſelves, and meritorious, and a ſtate of perfection. For we are neither recommended to God by means of our worldly eſtate, nor further from his acceptance, meerly for our worldly poſſeſſions and riches. Both ſtates, either of wealth or poverty have their difficulties; and we are concerned to know what temptations we are expoſed unto by either of them. If the rich be tempted to pride, and inſolence; the poor may be tempted to baſeneſs, and diſcontent. And if this be his caſe, he will receive no advantage by his poverty: and if the rich man become through his riches haughty, proud, and inſolent, he had better have been without them. You muſt therefore take the explication from the *context*. The rich man was not diſadvantaged, becauſe he *had* the good things of this life; nor the poor man recompenced, meerly for his poverty; but becauſe it was accompanied with humility, ſubmiſſion, and contentation in the divine providence.

Theſe two latter points being of great concernment, I ſhall ſpeak diſtinctly to them.

I. That if we would take a right eſtimate of man, we muſt conſider him, in reſpect to a double ſtate, here, and hereafter.

II. That

II. That the ſtate of man in the world to *come*, holds a proportion to his ſpirit and temper; to the tenour of his life, and actions in this world.

I. That if we would take a right eſtimate of man, we muſt conſider him in reſpect to a double ſtate; here, and hereafter; and that for theſe two reaſons.

1*ſt*. Becauſe there is *leſs* of man here, and more hereafter.

2*dly*. Becauſe man is more *valuable* than this world repreſents him to be.

I. The *firſt* of theſe I will make appear in three particulars, that there is *leſs* of man here, and much more hereafter.

1. In reſpect of his *time*, and *continuance* in being. Though *we* do but little, conſider how uncertain our being is in this world; yet ſee how abundant the *ſcripture is*, in admoniſhing us of our uncertain abode, and ſhort continuance in this world, *Job* vii. 6. *My days are ſwifter than a weaver's ſhuttle*; and you know how ſuddenly that goes and returns, *Job* viii. 9. *Our days upon earth are a ſhadow*, which if once a cloud come, the ſhadow vaniſhes. *Job* xiv. 1, 2. *Man that is born of a woman, is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth alſo as a ſhadow, and continueth not.* Gen. xlvii. 9. *Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been:* this was old *Jacob*'s account of himſelf. And men that have been ſerious and conſiderate, have thus reported concerning themſelves, and others: 1 *Chron.* xxix. 15. *For we are ſtrangers before thee and ſojourners, as were all our fa-*

thers: our days on the earth are as a ſhadow, and there is none abiding. Pſal. xxxix. 4. 5, 6. *Lord make me to know mine end; and the meaſure of my days what it is: that I may know how frail I am. Behold, thou haſt made my days as an hand-breadth, and mine age is as nothing before thee: verily every man, at his beſt eſtate, is altogether vanity. Surely every man walketh in a vain ſhew, ſurely they are diſquieted in vain.* Pſal. xc. 9. *We ſpend our years as a tale that is told.* Pſal. cii. 11. *My days are like a ſhadow that declineth: and I am withered like graſs.* Pſal. ciii. 15, 16. *As a flower of the field, ſo he flouriſheth. For the wind paſſeth over it, and it is gone.* Pſal. cxliv. 4. *Man is like to vanity, his days are as a ſhadow that paſſeth away.* Iſaiah xl. 6. *All fleſh is graſs, and all the goodlineſs thereof is as the flower of the field: the graſs withereth, the flower fadeth away.* And this is brought by the apoſtle, as an argument, that rich men ſhould rejoice when they are brought low. *James* i. 10. *Becauſe as the flower of the graſs, he ſhall paſs away.* And it is referred to in 1 *Pet.* i. 24. *For all fleſh is as graſs, and all the glory of man as the flower of graſs. The graſs withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away.* And good men have had this ſenſe of the ſhortneſs of their abode in this world. 1 *Pet.* ii. 11. *Dearly beloved, I beſeech you as ſtrangers and pilgrims, abſtain from fleſhly luſts which war againſt the ſoul.* And as *knowing they had no continuing city here,* they look't for one to come. *Heb.* xiii. 14. To all theſe places of holy writ give me leave to add one out of the apocryphal writers. *Wiſdom* v. 13. *As ſoon as we were born, we began to draw to our latter end.*

And

And ſee how he repreſents the condition of men in this world by things of the greateſt ſwiftneſs, and uncertainty; as a ſhadow, and as a poſt that haſteth by, which no man may ſtay; even ſo a man hurries through time, into eternity, v. 11. 12. *As a ſhip that paſſeth over the waves of the water, which when it is gone by, the trace thereof cannot be found, neither the path-way of the keel in the waves. Or as a bird that hath flown through the air, there is no token of her way to be found. Or like as when an arrow is ſhot at a mark, it parteth the air, which immediately cometh together again; ſo that a man cannot know where it went through.* Even ſo doth a man paſs through the world. But I need not ſtand to prove this, it being a point of undoubted certainty and every man's obſervation; but (the more is the pity) of too little conſideration. Let us therefore paſs over this point with the good meditation of the pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* xc. 12. *So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wiſdom.* Time is a thing of the greateſt importance, but of the moſt uncertain continuance; for we may ſay, upon the improvement of a little time, the ſtate and welfare of an immortal ſoul doth depend to eternity.

In this reſpect you ſee that leſs of a man is in this world than hereafter: here he is frail, and weak, brittle, and craſy, obnoxious to diſeaſes and all manner of accidents: ſo that, were we not the care of divine providence, when we conſider the many conveyances that are in our bodies, the varieties and changes we are expoſed unto: we ſhould think it a thouſand to one, that a man lived to ſix-

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ty years. That is the firſt thing; there is leſs of a man in this world, in reſpect of his being and *continuance* here.

2. In this ſtate, there is *leſs* of *right judgment* of things, and perſons. Things here, go under falſe appearances; and perſons here, are under the power of lying imaginations. The *platoniſts* have obſerved, that there is a world of diligence, care, and thoughtfulneſs neceſſary for a man to underſtand the truth. I ſhould not bely human nature, if I ſhould ſay, that the wiſeſt of us live very much in a fools *paradiſe*; and that in a world of things, we are miſtaken; and that our ſuppoſitions are not well grounded, nor our apprehenſions well governed, nor our hope and expectation well ſecured. There is much of that which is falſe, miſtaken and inſincere, that takes place in the *life* of man. I might here inſtance in wealth and riches, which are thought to be the greateſt reality in the world, and yet one of the wiſeſt men that ever was, and one that had the greateſt experience, hath told us, that it is great folly for a man to ſet his heart upon it. *Prov.* xxiii. 5. *Wilt thou ſet thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themſelves wings, they fly away, as an eagle towards heaven.* But then, as for the profane and diſſolute part of the world, *they* live altogether in a lie, *and* are falſe in the main. For the *fool hath ſaid in his heart there is no God.* Pſal. xiv. 1. Not that he hath any ground for ſuch a ſuppoſition or imagination: for ſee what the pſalmiſt ſaith, in the next words as an account from whence this opinion ariſeth, *corrupt are they, and*

have

have done abominable works. So that this wicked principle in their mind, did ariſe from the wicked practices of their lives. Whereas, it ought to be, *practice in purſuance of principle* : but here it is, *principle accommodate, and* ſuitable *to looſe and vile practice.* And *well* might the pſalmiſt call theſe *fools*, becauſe they are bold to controul the eternal and indiſpenſible reaſon of things, and venture to deny the difference between good and evil, upon a moral account. And certainly theſe, in a chriſtian ſtate, are horribly prodigious and monſtrous, that ſhall take up ſuch principles ; when the very philoſophers, who had only the light of nature, have ſo ſtrongly vindicated the difference of things, upon a moral account. And, if mind and underſtanding in man, ſignify any thing ; or if a man know any thing in the world, by the natural uſe of his mind and underſtanding ; he knows the difference of good and evil, upon a moral account. But many mens principles are vitiated and corrupted by the exorbitancy of their practice, and a vitiated ſenſe is no true judge. But to ſpeak home to the point, that men here *live in a lie*, and are under miſapprehenſion, and led away with falſe appearances, that there is but *little* in the life of man that is ſincere, and true : the fool hath ſaid to himſelf, that *he had goods laid up for many years*, and that his ſoul might now, *eat drink, and be merry*, Luke xii. 19. But v. 20. God ſaid unto him, *thou fool, this night thy ſoul ſhall be required of thee ; then whoſe ſhall thoſe things be which thou haſt provided.* So *Iſa.* lvi. 12. we read of ſome that ſay, *come let us fetch wine, and we will fill*

fill ourſelves with ſtrong drink : and to morrow ſhall be as this day, and much more abundant. But ſtay a little ; that is well, that ends well. He that will make his reckoning of himſelf, and leave out God, he muſt reckon again. He that will make up his accounts by his own fancy, may put himſelf into a fool's paradiſe : but things in the iſſue will not anſwer his expectation, and ſuppoſition. This is the *calamity* of us mortals ; not that which is true, ſolid, real and ſubſtantial doth always take place ; but that which is imaginary doth take too great place in the life of man : not that which is honeſt, right and good ; but that which is pleaſing and profitable : or rather, not things of the mind, but matters of ſenſe, do prevail upon many men. And that is the ſecond thing : *leſs* of man is in this ſtate, than in the other ; becauſe there is ſo little of *true judgment* of things, and perſons. But

3. Leſs of *weal* or *woe*, is in this ſtate, than in the other ; for men *in* this ſtate do not fully reap the fruit of their own ways ; they do not come to the proof of the bargain *they* have made. Here, men only triumph in their imaginations, becauſe they think to carry the cauſe, and that things *muſt* be ſo, becauſe they *would* have them ſo. But hereafter, there will be ſad reflection, as you have this matter admirably expreſſed in the book of *Wiſdom*, v. 1. &c. *Then ſhall the righteous man ſtand in great boldneſs before the face of ſuch as have afflicted him, and made no account of his labours. When they ſee it, they ſhall be troubled with terrible fear, and ſhall be amazed at the ſtrangeneſs of his ſalvation, ſo far beyond all*

ll that they looked for. And they repenting, and groan-g for anguiſh of ſpirit, ſhall ſay within themſelves, his was he whom we had ſometimes in deriſion, and a roverb of reproach. We fools, accounted his life mad-eſs, and his end to be without honour. How is he umbred among the children of God, and his lot is a-ong the ſaints! Therefore have we erred from the ay of truth, and the light of righteouſneſs hath not ined unto us, and the ſun of righteouſneſs roſe not u-n us. We wearied ourſelves in the way of wicked-eſs and deſtruction; yea we have gone through deſerts here there lay no way: but as for the way of the ord, we have not known it. What hath pride pro-ted us, or what good hath riches with our vaunting, rought us? All theſe things are paſſed away like a adow, and as a poſt that haſteth by. This was the epreſentation that is happily made in this book, hich ſhews the ſad and miſerable condition that very ſinner will be in at the laſt.

Whatſoever of good that is here begun, hereafter ill be promoted, advanced, and perfected: and he like may be ſaid of evil, for the *backſlider in eart ſhall be filled with his own ways*, *Prov.* xiv. 14. Every ſinner *ſooner* or later ſhall receive the fruit of heir own doings. It is a moſt ſignal place, that of he apoſtle, *Rom.* ii. 5. &c. wicked men are ſaid *after heir hard and impenitent heart, to treaſure up to hemſelves wrath againſt the day of wrath, and reve-ation of the righteous judgment of God; who will ren-er to every man according to his deeds. To them who y patient continuance in well doing, ſeek for glory, and ionour, and immortality, eternal life; but unto them who*

who are contentious and obey not the truth, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguiſh upon every ſoul of man that doth evil; to the Jew, firſt, and alſo to the Gentile. Alas! we ſee but the out-ſide of men, and we do incompetently judge. But whoſoever doth allow himſelf, in ways of ſin and wickedneſs; at times, he will have fears and jealouſies, doubts and ſuſpicions, however he may appear to others, to be jolly and merry; and to have but little trouble. For this I dare ſay, of all men that continue in ſin without repentance, unleſs in one caſe, and that is a worſe; unleſs they be deſerted of God, and given up to hardneſs of heart; ſaving *in* this caſe, men that do affect to tranſgreſs the ſettled rule and law of righteouſneſs and honeſty; that make no conſcience to approve themſelves to God, the laws of nature, or of revelation; the rules of ſcripture, or of reaſon; theſe men undoubtedly have ſuch times, wherein their hearts miſgive them; have much of heart-ach, much of fear and jealouſy. And, if they have none of theſe, it is worſe with them, for then they are leſs recoverable. Whereas in the ways of ſobriety, reaſon and virtue, religion, and true goodneſs, there is certainly hearts-eaſe, and a compoſure of mind: there is an inward calm and ſerenity; there is ſatisfaction for the preſent, and a well-grounded expectation for the future. And this is to be expected, as that which is connatural; and it doth not fail. This mans affairs are here, ſolid, and ſubſtantial; and hereafter they will be further ſettled and confirmed. And ſo I have given you an account of the truth of that reaſon, why there

there is *leſs of a man here and more hereafter.* For he hath leſs of ſtay and continuance in this world; leſs of true judgment, and leſs of weal or woe.

DISCOURSE XVIII.

The true Valuation of MAN.

LUKE xvi. 25.

But Abraham ſaid, ſon, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedſt thy good things, and likewiſe Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

IN the reſpects before-mentioned, and others that poſſibly might be ſuperadded, it appears that there is *leſs* of man in this world. But I may alſo adjoin by way of exception, ſome particulars to the *contrary*; for I muſt acknowledge, that in ſome reſpects, our being in this world is very conſiderable. I will inſtance in three particulars,

1. In reſpect of man's *poſſibility.*
2. In reſpect of man's *opportunity.*
3. In reſpect of man's well-grounded faith and *expectation.* In theſe reſpects, a man's being in this world, is very conſiderable and highly valuable.

1. In reſpect of man's poſſibility; for *here* we may lay a good foundation, upon which the happy ſuperſtructure

ſuperſtructure of glory *hereafter*, may be ere
For though the worſt that can be ſaid, prove t
that man is a bankrupt, and hath ſuffered ſhipwr
is confounded in his principles, marred and ſp
by his apoſtacy, defection, degeneracy, and con
ing to iniquity : admitting that he is perfectly
trary to the true complexion he was in, in the
that God made him, yet all this malady may be
ed, and his condition is recoverable. Thoug
hath committed ſin, it may be pardoned ; thc
he hath alienated himſelf from God, yet he ma
turn, and God may receive him ; though he l
given God offence, yet God is reconcileable. T
is a great ſaying of our Saviour, *Mark* ix. 23.
things are poſſible to him that believeth. This is
both in the active and paſſive ſenſe : that is,
man apply himſelf to God, and his mind be cha
ed, it is poſſible that he may do all thoſe acts t
are neceſſary for his ſafety and recovery, thro
the aſſiſtance of God's grace. That for the *ac*
ſenſe. It is true alſo in the *paſſive* ſenſe. All thi
may be done for him, in him, or upon him :
may be brought out of a condition of enmity, t
ſtate of friendſhip with God : all things are pc
ble to be done for him, in him, or upon him. A
it is enough to make this out, that God is placal
and reconcileable ; and if this were not true, th
could be no hope. If this were not known to m
there could be no place for repentance, nor co
any man find any diſpoſition in his heart, G
ward. But all men are bound to think that G
is placable and reconcileable ; he is not elſe the f

and chiefeſt goodneſs. So that, in reſpect of man's *poſſibility*, his being in this world is very conſiderable, But,

2. In reſpect of man's *opportunity*, his being is very conſiderable; and this is much more than a bare poſſibility. If this were all that I could ſay to a man, that a thing is poſſible, it would be no great encouragement. But I can tell ſinners, that they have *opportunity*, and an opportunity is the *nick of time*. Take things in their ſeaſon, and they will be eaſily done. Now we enjoy a day of grace, and a day of grace doth import opportunity. We are now under God's call and invitation. There is no man in the world, that hath the bible in his hand, or that hath heard any thing out of it, who hath any reaſon to doubt but that he is called of God. What we read in the bible, we may build upon, and apply to ourſelves, with as good aſſurance, as if God did diſpatch an angel from heaven to us. We are in this day of grace, God's invited gueſts; and we are all of us under the operation of the divine Spirit, and may depend upon the aſſiſtance of the divine grace. And for this, I offer to you that ſignal place, though our tranſlation abate a little of the emphaſis of it. *Phil.* ii. 12, 13. *Work out your own ſalvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleaſure.* But in the *Greek* it is the participle *working*. The verb is verified by one ſingle act: but the participle imports a *continuation of action*. That is, apply yourſelves to God, and ſet yourſelves about the buſineſs of your recovery, by acts of righteouſneſs

teouſneſs, goodneſs, and truth; and look not upon your own weakneſs, and indiſpoſition; for *God is working* in you, both to will, and to do, of his own good pleaſure. Apply yourſelves to God, and you will find him in motion; and where God is, there is ſtrength, and ſufficiency, and any thing may be done through the divine aid; and therefore we have encouragement, to be up and doing, according to the advice of the apoſtle, *Eph.* v. 14. *Awake thou that ſleepeſt, and ariſe from the dead, and Chriſt ſhall give thee light.* We are ſure of God, by virtue of his promiſe: and this we may depend upon, that whereſoever God begins, he gives in ſome aid, and aſſiſtance; which aid, though it be leſs than we may receive afterwards, yet it will enable a man to do ſomething: and that God, who of his own motion, grace, and good will, begins with *leſs*; yet he will go on with further aſſiſtance, and with this a man may do more: for it is certain, the failure will not be on God's part: and therefore if we have ſufficiency or the act that God calls us unto, at preſent, and aſſurance of further aſſiſtance, as there ſhall be need; we have encouragement, not only to engage us to begin, but to continue in thoſe ways that tend to our recovery. *Seek the Lord therefore while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near*, as the prophet adviſeth, *Iſa.* lv. 6. For there wants nothing but what lies on our part to perform, and that is our concurrence, our ſubſerviency and conſent. For it is irrational for us to think, that God having made us intelligent and voluntary agents, that he ſhould force and conſtrain

us;

us; and that he ſhould not expect the uſe of thoſe powers that he hath given us. And this is the 2d. Our being in the world is very *conſiderable* in reſpect of our *opportunity*.

3. Our being in the world is alſo conſiderable in reſpect of our aſſured *hope and expectation* which we may have in this probation-ſtate. God's merciful declarations to us ſcatter all fears and jealouſies. God's gracious promiſes and invitations are a good ground for our expectation: and the ſcriptures are full on this account, *Ezek.* xviii. 23. *Have I any pleaſure at all that the wicked ſhould die? ſaith the Lord God: and not that he ſhould return from his way and live?* We do obſerve, that theſe interrogations do moſt peremptorily deny. *Have I any pleaſure?* that is, I have no pleaſure that the wicked ſhould die. And ſo you have it expreſſed, *v.* 32. *I have no pleaſure in the death of him that dieth*: but my pleaſure and delight is in this, that the wicked ſhould return and live. And again, *Ezek.* xxxiii. 11. *As I live, ſaith the Lord God, I have no pleaſure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live.* Here we have God's *oath*: *As I live, ſaith the Lord*; which is a word fit for him only to uſe, who is the firſt cauſe and original of being: but it is a word too big for the mouth of any creature. For our being is altogether arbitrary and dependent; and therefore though this word is ſometimes uſed among men; if they did conſider, they would not do it: For alas! We are but as a vapour; and if God withdraw himſelf, we preſently fall into our firſt principles, and return unto the

duſt. But to return: many ſcriptures you have more to this purpoſe. God ſaith, *Iſa.* v. 4. *What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it? And how often* (ſaith our Saviour) *would I have gathered thee, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not?* And again, *come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you reſt*, Matt. xi. 28. And ſo the ſcripture ends, *Rev.* iii. 20. *Behold I ſtand at the door and knock, if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will ſup with him, and he with me.* This is the 3d. Our aſſured *hope and expectation.*

I have now done with the *firſt* reaſon. If you would make a juſt eſtimate of man, you muſt conſider him in reſpect *to his double ſtate*, his exiſtence in time, and his future exiſtence in eternity. For as to his preſent being, you find him here but of ſhort and uncertain continuance; you find him here labouring much under falſe opinions and lying imaginations; and whether he be here happy, or miſerable, it is *leſs* than it will be hereafter: yet his being here, is not to be deſpiſed, and over-looked; for upon three accounts it is very *conſiderable*, *viz.* in reſpect of his poſſibility, opportunity, and his well grounded hope and expectation.

2*ly.* I come now to the 2*d reaſon*, why, if we would make a juſt eſtimate of man, we muſt conſider him in reſpect to his double ſtate of exiſtence, in time and in eternity: for man is a much more *valuable* creature than his affairs in this world repreſent him to be: and this I will make appear in three particulars. Becauſe 1. Man

1. Man is here in his ſtate of infancy, and non-age; he is not yet come to the full uſe of his parts; yea, he is as it were impriſoned, and incumber'd with a groſs, dull and craſy body.

2. In this ſtate, man is neither *as he ſhould be*, nor if he himſelf well conſider, *as he would be*.

3. There are many *appearances* in this ſtate, which repreſent man to be but a *mean and ordinary* thing, whereas he is in truth, a noble and generous creature, made for attendance upon God, and to converſe with angels in glory, as I ſhall ſhew you in ſeveral particulars.

1. Man is here, in his ſtate of infancy and non-age: he is here as a child in his minority, who is not ſo much as truſted with himſelf, or his own affairs; and much leſs with the affairs of other men: who becauſe of his imperfection, is not able to do any legal act, any act that may extend to his own prejudice. Here he is but as a flower in the bloſſom, and in the ſpring of his years: and beſides, he is in a ſtate of limitation and confinement, in reſpect of his body, and in reſpect of his mind. In reſpect of his body, he is impriſoned, and incumbered: therefore we read, that this body which we now have, is to be ſo remarkably changed, that it is ſaid it ſhall be a *ſpiritual body*, and that this corruption ſhall put on incorruption, and be made like unto the body of our Saviour, or a *glorified body*; and this ſhall be effected by his almighty power, which is able to ſubdue all things to himſelf. We now dwell in *houſes of clay*, but we ſhall then have ahouſe not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Our bodies ſhall then be made fit inſtruments for our ſouls, whereas now, as the philoſopher tells us, the body is an impediment to the mind and to all divine contemplation. It was the great conſolation that *Socrates* * had, when he was condemned to die; what (ſaith he to his friend that came to comfort him) is this, but to do that which I have endeavoured to do all along my life; that is to lay aſide my body, which yet never kept company with my mind? thus was he able to ſay. So that, as a child in the cradle, ſo is a man in this world. Our minds are confined in the body: In this tabernacle (ſaith the apoſtle) we *groan being burdened*; this is the voice of all ſpiritually awakened ſouls "Let us "take our flight to heaven and ſee in the light of "God's countenance, and forſake this low and dirty "world, for here ſouls are hindered as to their high-"eſt operations of mind, and underſtanding, and the largeneſs of their wills and affections." As *Plato* ſaith well, we have here certain inclinations, at times, to move upward towards heaven, and then we fall down again as birds that are tied by the leg. We are as they ſay, heavy behind. In this body, the very reaſon of our mind is materiated, and the very ſentiments of our ſouls (to uſe the common phraſe) do taſte of the cask. That is the firſt thing: man is a far more conſiderable creature than his ſtate in this world doth repreſent him to be; becauſe he is here in his *infancy*, he is not at his full growth, not at perfect liberty; but is contracted by a groſs and heavy body.

2. Man

* Plato, apologia Socratis.

2. Man in this ſtate is neither; 1. *as he ſhall be.* Nor,

2. (If he well conſider) *as he would be*: and therefore he is not in perfect welfare here.

1. Man is *not as he ſhould be*, becauſe of non-uſe and miſuſe, and abuſe of himſelf; of which every one is more or leſs (in ſome degree) guilty. And therefore as the lawyers tell us, if men do not deſtroy, yet they weaken their title by theſe things. Now we are all of us guilty, in reſpect of *non-uſe* of ourſelves, in that we do not employ ourſelves about God, as we ſhould; and of *miſuſe*, witneſs the contracted evil habits; for by cuſtom and practice men may ſo miſuſe themſelves, as to become lame and blind; and therefore the ſcripture doth apply to us thus *Rev.* iii. 18. *I counſel thee to buy of me eye-ſalve that thou mayeſt ſee*: the remedy doth declare the nature of the malady. If a man doth but conſider he will be a wonder to himſelf, and he will marvel how it is become ſo with him, as *Rebecca* ſaid, *Gen.* xxv. 22. *If it be ſo, why am I thus!* Every man is ſenſible of contradiction from within, and a diverſity from himſelf; he is not all of a piece, nor hath the power of his apprehenſions. That which is *born after the fleſh perſecutes that which is born after the ſpirit*, Gal. iv. 29. I do enlarge the apoſtle's words, and ſpeak them upon a natural account; that is, things that are founded on the body are not the genuine iſſue of mind and underſtanding; bodily temper and inclination doth make it hard for us to exerciſe our underſtanding and reaſon. And he is the moſt valuable man that can ſubdue every

thing to himſelf, all appetites and deſires to ſuch government. This we have experience of, that we are but weak to diſcern; and many times unreſolved what to do, and uncertain to perform. If we come to judge, we judge fallibly; if we come to reſolve, we are off and on; if we come to execute and perform, we are many times beaten off from ourſelves. There is a whole chapter, *Luke* xv. to repreſent this loſt ſtate of man in three parables, that of a loſt groat, a loſt ſheep, and a loſt ſon. That of the *loſt groat* repreſents the ſtupidity, dulneſs and incapacity of ſinners; they being void of all underſtanding: for a groat is a thing without any life or motion: by which parable is repreſented the ſtupidity and ſenſleſsneſs of ſinners; that are ſunk, and loſt. Then there is the *wandring ſheep*: A ſheep is indeed an innocent creature, but very ſilly and expoſed to all ſorts of dangers; from dogs, wolves, briers, and thorns; and if once 'tis gone from the ſood, there is no hope of returning by its own care. This doth alſo repreſent the ſtate of ſinners, who are very fools, when they do part from the way of righteouſneſs; and very ſeldom return by their own care and conſideration, but even like loſt ſheep wandring from the fold, ſo they wander up and down in the wilderneſs of this world. The third parable is that of the *prodigal ſon*, which repreſents the ſtate of diſſolute and profane ſinners that make havock of their conſcience, that are deſperate and preſumptuous, and very hardly drawn to any true conſideration. Theſe three parables repreſent the ſtate and condition of loſt ſinners. From all which

which you may underſtand, that if we were not called from heaven, and God did not give us ears to hear, and draw ſinners with power from above, there were little hopes of reclaiming ſinners from their deſperate condition. And that is the *firſt* thing in this particular, man in this ſtate is *not as he ſhould be*, becauſe he hath contracted guilt, becauſe he hath marred his ſpirit and ſpoiled his principle: he hath done that which is unnatural. And you muſt know, that as the edge of a razor is ſooner turned, becauſe of its keenneſs; ſo in this caſe, the mind of man, being made to carry accuracy of apprehenſion; if he do a baſe, vile and unnatural act, he doth more marr and ſpoil his mind that is made to ingenuity: whereas blunter edges would endure more violence. Man therefore is a more conſiderable creature than his preſent ſtate doth repreſent him to be.

2. Neither is he, *as he would be*, if he do well conſider; for this we have experience of, that if any man hath worſted himſelf, and his circumſtances be grown worſe than they have been, and he apprehends himſelf a loſer; he will never ſit down ſatisfied, but his whole thought and contrivance will be about his recovery, and to become as he was. This we obſerve in nature, that there is nothing at reſt and quiet, being in an unnatural ſtate, but every thing endeavours to recover itſelf. Water, if it be ſullied never ſo much, if it hath time, will work the dregs to the bottom. And every thing in nature if it may, it will not only preſerve itſelf in its natural condition: but being diverted from its natural

tural courſe, will recover itſelf, as ſoon as it may. And do you think that the rational nature will not deſire to be as well, as by nature, it could be? Now we having contracted guilt, and ſpoiled our principles by conſenting to iniquity: if we do but conſider, it will come into our minds, to recover ourſelves by repentance; by which there is a revoking, and as it were, an undoing of what hath been unduly done. For whoſoever commits a ſin and doth not repent of it, he lives in it: but he that having committed a ſin, repents of it, he doth revoke and undo it as far as it is in his power. Therefore man in a ſtate of ſin, is *not as he ſhould be*, for ſin is unnatural: neither is he as he *would be*, becauſe he is in a ſtate of deformity, and impurity; and it is natural for every thing not only to conſerve, but to recover its own perfection. That is the *ſecond* particular which ſhews man to be a more valuable creature than his ſtate in this world doth repreſent him to be: becauſe in this ſtate, he neither is as he ſhould be, (nor if he conſiders) *as he would be.*

3. There are many *appearances* in this world, that ſeem to repreſent man a very *mean* and ordinary creature: whereas, upon a true account, he is very noble and generous, fit for attendance upon God, and converſe with angels. Now if I can make this out, you will eaſily grant, that man is a much *more valuable* creature, than this world doth repreſent him; and this I ſhall do in *ſix* particulars.

1. The ſtate of man in this world doth repreſent him ſubject to the ſame vanity, that all other creatures lie under, as in *Job.* xvii. 14. *I have ſaid to*

corruption,

corruption, thou art my father : to the worm, thou art my mother and my ſiſter. And what worſe thing befalls any creature, than to be expoſed to corruption and rottenneſs ? So *Eccleſ.* iii. 19. ſaith the wiſe man, *that which befalleth the ſons of men, befalleth beaſts, even one thing befalleth them : as the one dieth, ſo dieth the other, yea they have all one breath ; ſo that a man hath no preheminence above a beaſt, for all is vanity.* Thus *Solomon* (the great ſearcher into things) repreſents man. But this is all as to his outward ſtate and appearance ; for in reality, man is made for immortality, and his ſoul is divine. For ſo *Solomon* ſaith, *Eccl.* xii. 7. The *ſpirit doth return to God that gave it* ; and *Job.* xix. 25. *I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that I ſhall ſee him at the laſt.* And though I do believe that the *firſt meaning of* theſe wrods, is to expreſs *Job*'s faith and confidence in God, that he ſhould have his worldly eſtate reſtored again to him, as it did afterwards prove, and that with his very eyes, that were then even waſted and deſtroyed by his bodily infirmities, he ſhould ſee his Redeemer : yet according to a *fuller ſenſe*, I underſtand theſe words of the ſtate of the reſurrection and glory, which ſhould be after this life was ended ; upon which account our Saviour puts that queſtion, *what ſhall it profit a man to gain the whole world and to loſe his own ſoul ?* Matt. xvi. 26. A very bad bargain, becauſe that which is given as a price, is of much more worth and value, than that which is purchaſed. If we believe theſe ſcriptures, we muſt acknowledge, that mens ſouls ſhall continue after their bodies ; and if ſo, he is much more conſiderable

able, than his *mean* ſtate and condition in this world do repreſent him. This is the firſt? But

2. This ſtate repreſents a man as very low and mean, becauſe he *is ſubjected* to low and mean *employments*, fit only to converſe with other creatures. And accordingly many men condemn themſelves to the drudgery of this world; and do make their rational faculties very *Gibeonites*, and employ them to hew wood and draw water; and much of this hath an antecedent foundation in the curſe, *Gen.* iii. 19. *In the ſweat of thy face ſhalt thou eat bread*, 2 Theſſ. iii. 10. *He that will not work, neither let him eat. And man is born to labour*, ſaith *Job*. And he that will not employ himſelf to the utmoſt, to maintain himſelf, comes not within the compaſs of other mens charity. And therefore *Solomon* ſends the ſluggard to ſchool to learn of the irrational creatures, *Go to the ant thou ſluggard, conſider her ways and be wiſe*, Prov. vi. 6. Now this ſtate of man repreſents him as made to common drudgery and ſervice. Whereas if we conſider, man is made for attendance upon God, and to be happy in the enjoyment of him: and that 'tis the buſineſs of man to govern himſelf according to the dictates of reaſon, truth and virtue, and to maintain converſe and fellowſhip with God. To this, man was *made*; this was the very end and deſign of his creation, to have a ſenſe of God as the firſt cauſe; and to have reſt in him, as the center: and to have intention of God as the laſt end. O Lord thou haſt made us for thyſelf, and for thy pleaſure we are and were created. And the wiſe man ſaith, *the ſpirit in man is the candle of the Lord.*

Lord. And in this ſenſe is that true which *Solomon* ſaith, *Eccleſ.* iii. 11. *God hath ſet the world in mens heart*; not as we ſet it, by covetouſneſs, and inordinate deſire; but to ſhew that man's ſoul doth in value and worth tranſcend the whole creation below him. God hath contracted the diſperſed excellencies of the creation *in man's heart*; man in reſpect of vivacity and poſſibility to act, doth tranſcend the whole creation below him.

3. This preſent ſtate repreſents a man in a condition of *beggary*, *dependence*, and *neceſſity*, Job. i. 21. *Naked came I into the world, and naked ſhall I go out.* 1 *Tim.* vi. 7. *We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.* We are beholden to every creature, either for food, or for raiment, or for defence, or for ſome other accommodation. Man hath nothing, but the uſe of his reaſon, whereby he doth outwit the creatures below him, and ſpoil them of their ſeveral excellencies, and by that which is their defence, defend himſelf againſt them. Man comes into the world moſt ſhiftleſs and helpleſs, the moſt unprovided for of any creature; he hath no way to help himſelf, but by *crying*, and yet that (without any declaration, of *why*, and *what* it *ails*) is ſufficient. Indeed, there is no ſecurity to human nature, in reſpect of our coming into the world, but only *this*, that man is born in the hands of reaſon, and loving affection. Thus man appears to be in a condition of *beggary*, *dependence and neceſſity*; whereas if we conſider man duly, we ſhall find him to be the glory of God's creation in this lower world; the maſter-piece of God's workmanſhip; that

that there is more of value and worth in him than in all the creation beſides. The ſun itſelf, that enlightens the world, and ſcatters away all ſtench, putrefaction, and corruption; is yet but darkneſs, and a cloud in compare with the motion of mind and underſtanding, inquiring into and diſcovering the reaſon of things. For the mind of man takes cognizance of God, receives from him, and returns to him; and carries a continual ſenſe of God within itſelf, whereas the ſun can do none of theſe things, nor no creature in this viſible world, beſides man. Therefore it was wiſely done of *Plutarch*, that he would not make ſo *much* the *uſe of reaſon* to be the formal character of man, to diſtinguiſh him from other creatures, as the uſe and *exerciſe of religion*. For as to the uſe of reaſon, they either have a participation or an imitation of us: but they make no returns unto God, nor have any principle of conſcience within them, from a ſenſe of the difference of things. Upon this account, our Saviour ſaith, *what can be given in exchange for a man's ſoul?* Matt. xvi. 26. and the pſalmiſt ſaith, *the redemption of a ſoul is precious, and ceaſeth for ever.* Pſal. xlix. 8. And that is the third particular, this ſtate repreſents a man in a condition of *beggary, and dependency*, being beholden to all other creatures, for relief of his neceſſities, for matters of convenience or defence; whereas in reality, man is the glory of God's creation, and hath that in him, which is of more value and worth, than the whole world beſides.

4. This ſtate repreſents a man as *worn out with ſollicitude and care for himſelf*, as being tormented with

with fear and more to ſeek, than any other creature. He goes about the world as a wanderer and a vagabond, always ſeeking, and complaining, as the pſalmiſt ſpeaks of the redeemed of the Lord, *Pſ.* cvii. 4, 5. even *they wandred in the wilderneſs in a ſolitary way, they found no city to dwell in; hungry and thirſty, their ſoul fainted in them.* This is a true repreſentation of man's reſtleſsneſs, and uneaſy condition in this world. And the preacher goes beyond all this, in repreſenting the ſickly and diſtempered condition of man in this world, *Eccl.* iv. 8. *There is one alone, and there is not a ſecond; yea, he hath neither child nor brother: yet is there no end of all his labour, neither is his eye ſatisfied with riches, neither ſaith he, for whom do I labour, and bereave my ſoul of good?* It doth not ſo much as once come into his mind to ſay, *why do I wear out myſelf, and deprive myſelf of the comforts of life?* this is alſo *vanity*, yea it is a *ſore travel.* This ſtate repreſents a man more ſollicitous, and more inquiſitive than any other creature, for they take little care, but depend upon common providence; *they* enjoy themſelves more freely in ſummer, and are not ſtraitned in the winter. But yet in reality, man is God's peculiar care and charge: for *Job.* xxxv. 11. it is ſaid, *he teacheth us more than the beaſts of the earth and makes us wiſer than the fowls of heaven*; which argues that man is under God's diſcipline. And the *pſalmiſt* declares that there was more of curioſity in the creation of man than of other creatures. *Pſ.* cxxxix. 14, 15. *I will praiſe thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made, marvelous are thy works, and that my ſoul knoweth*

right

right well. My ſubſtance was not hid from thee when I was made in ſecret, and curiouſly wrought in the loweſt parts of the earth; *which* intimates the care of God in man's creation. And ſo it is repreſented in *Geneſis*; for when other things were created, it is only ſaid, *let them be*: they were, accordingly: as *let there be light*, and there *was light*, Gen. i. 3. But when he came to make man, he ſaid, *let us make man in our image, after our likeneſs*. Gen. i. 26. And for his proviſion, God intended, that the rich furniture of the ſea, earth and air, ſhould be for his uſe, having put in ſubjection to him, *all ſheep and oxen, yea and the beaſts of the field, the fowls of the air, and the fiſh of the ſea*, Pſal. viii. 7, 8. The providence of God is no where wanting, but moſt intenſely viſible in human affairs. And this our Saviour made an argument, why men ſhould not doubt, but that God would provide for them becauſe he fed the ravens, and took care of the ſmalleſt birds, and cloathed the lillies of the field (*Luke* xii. 24.) and therefore he would much leſs be wanting to thoſe that were made after his own image. And for this reaſon, God ſaith he will *require the life of man, at the hand of every beaſt will I require it, and at the hand of man, at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man: whoſo ſheddeth mans blood, by man ſhall his blood be ſhed: for in the image of God made he man.* *Gen.* ix. 5, 6. And *Satan* acknowledgeth this, in the argument he uſeth to God *Job.* i. *Doth Job fear God for nought? ver.* 10. *Thou haſt ſet an hedge about him, and about his houſe, and about all that he hath.* This is the fourth particular that

hat the *appearance* of this world doth miſrepreſent he ſtate of man. For man ſeems to be moſt expoed, and without defence; whereas, in reality he s the peculiar care and charge of divine providence, nd God, that is no where wanting to any of the orks of his hands, doth more eſpecially concern imſelf in his care and government of man, and doth verely challenge any one that ſhall offer him any arm.

DISCOURSE XIX.

The true Valuation of MAN.

LUKE xvi. 25.

ut Abraham ſaid, ſon, remember that thou in thy lifetime receiveďſt thy good things, and likewiſe Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

THis ſtate repreſents man to be in *danger* from him that is next him, and of his own kind; for ſo is the world through *ſin* come degenerate, that *one man, as it were, is bene a wolf to another:* and it is *de facto* true, that who is *born after the fleſh, doth perſecute him that born after the ſpirit.* The wars of ſeveral counes have given too much teſtimony to this matter, ho have been the ſo highly applauded men in ſto-

ry; but thoſe great *conquerours*, the great ſelf-deſigners and troublers of mankind? *David* complains both of friends, and enemies, *Pſal.* xli. 5. *Mine enemies ſpeak evil of me; when ſhall he die, and his name periſh*, &c. *v.* 9. *yea mine own familiar friend in whom I truſted, which did eat of my bread, hath lift up his heel againſt me.* Thus it is in this world, whereas God *made the ſecond* in order to the *firſt*, as you find, *Gen.* ii. 18. *It is not good that man ſhould be alone: I will make him an help meet for him.* This is ſo true, that *Ariſtotle* hath obſerved, that whoſoever being a finite and limited creature can be alone, he had need be as *good as God*, or is as *bad as the devil*, or as *dull as a beaſt*. He that can be happy alone, either he is good, like to God, ſatisfying himſelf in the fulneſs of his own goodneſs; or elſe is as bad as the devil, ſatiating himſelf, in his own malice; or elſe as ſtupid as a beaſt, pleaſing himſelf in his own dulneſs, taking no cognizance of things, but ſatisfying himſelf in eating, drinking, and ſleeping in his own dullneſs. *Solomon* hath obſerved, *Eccl.* iv. 9. *Two are better than one, and wo be to him that is alone.* In converſe men receive one from another, and communicate one to another with great delight and ſatisfaction. If men be of any improvement in their intellectuals, there is no part of a man's life more profitable, nor more ſatisfactory than rational and ingenuous converſe. It is highly pleaſing to a man to ſee the face of his friend; it doth often recover a man out of his dumps, and deliver him from melancholy. So it is, and ſo it would be if the intention of God in his creation of man, did attain its proper effect.

6. and

6. and *Laſtly*, the ſtate of man in this life repreſents his condition *otherwiſe than indeed it is*; that is, it repreſents a man, the *object of the devil's envy*, uſurpation, and tyranny, *Eph.* ii. 2. He is called the *prince of the power of the air, the ſpirit that worketh in the children of diſobedience.* A ſad account for men to be under the uſurpation of ſo monſtrous and degenerate a creature! Whereas God made man, with principles of reaſon, and underſtanding, the devil abuſeth him by cheats and impoſtures, as we have many ſtories in the holy ſcriptures. 1 *Kings* xxii. 22. *I will be a lying ſpirit in the mouth of all his prophets.* And 1 *Chron.* xxi. 1. it is ſaid, that *Satan ſtood up againſt Iſrael, and provoked David to number Iſrael.* Obſerve alſo how Satan doth miſrepreſent *Job* to God; he makes him ſordid and baſe in his ſervice, *Job.* i. 9, 11. *Doth Job ſerve God for nought? Put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath*, (diſappoint him, croſs him) *and he will curſe thee to thy face.* Sometimes he miſrepreſents God; as to our firſt parents, *Gen.* iii. 5. *God doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes ſhall be opened, and ye ſhall be as Gods, knowing good and evil.* This is the notion his words carry in them, that they were leſs beholden to God, than they thought: and that if God had not dealt to them with a ſtraight hand, and grudged them that excellency which they were capable of, they might have been like to God, knowing good and evil. And this he ſuggeſts, to draw them from God, and to abate the ſenſe of their obligation to him, and to work them into an ill opinion of God: that though

they were in ſome meaſure, beholden to him for their creation, yet, if he had pleaſed, he might have exalted them to a much higher degree, than he had done. Thus he works upon men by miſrepreſentations, by cheats, and impoſtures. And other ſcriptures ſhew how Satan works upon men by open reſiſtance, *Zech.* iii. 1. When *Joſhua the high prieſt ſtood before the angel of the Lord, and Satan ſtood at his right hand to reſiſt him.* And the apoſtle tells us, *Eph.* vi. 12. *We wreſtle not againſt fleſh and blood, but againſt principalities and powers.* And *Luke* viii. 12. *Then cometh the devil and taketh away the word out of their hearts.* And *Luke* xxii. 31. *And the Lord ſaid, Simon, Simon, Satan hath deſired to have you, that he may ſift you as wheat.* 2 Tim. ii. 26. *That God may recover them out of the ſnare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.* This is the laſt repreſentation which makes man to appear a leſs valuable and conſiderable creature, than indeed he is. But to this I ſay, that this enemy is extraordinary, and out of the order of God's creation. God made no ſuch enemy for man; but ſo it comes to paſs, through the degeneracy and apoſtacy of his higher creation. And ſince the angels by their apoſtacy, are become ſuch, God put a guard upon the devils, and he will finally deliver us from them, if we do but what we may, through the aſſiſtance of God's grace to reſiſt him; though he does what he can to deceive, if it were poſſible, the elect, yet if we reſiſt him, he ſhall flee from us, *Matt.* xxiv. 24. *James* iv. 7. And it is ſaid, *Rev.* xx. 2, 3. That the *angel laid hold on the dragon, that old ſerpent, which*

which is the devil, and Satan, and bound him a thouſand years. And caſt him into a bottomleſs pit, and ſhut him up, that he ſhould deceive the nations no more; and v. 14. *Death and hell were caſt into the lake of fire.*

I do verily believe, and perſuade myſelf, that God doth generally defend all men in the world, by his ſpecial and particular providence, againſt the devil; ſo that unleſs men either willfully give God an offence, or betray themſelves to the devil, by their own voluntary conſent, he can have no power over them. Neither do I think that every act of ſin is of this nature, but it muſt be ſuch a ſpecifick, ſuch a miſcarriage, ſuch a way of ſinning in kind, which doth incurr a particular forfeiture of God's protection againſt the devil. That you may underſtand my meaning, I will give you two inſtances, out of the ſcripture. The firſt ſhall be that in 1 *Sam.* xxviii. 6, 7. And when *Saul enquired of the Lord, the Lord anſwered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets. Then ſaid Saul unto his ſervants, ſeek me a woman that hath a familiar ſpirit, that I may go to her, and enquire of her.* A like paſſage you have, 2 *Kings* i. 2. *And Ahaziah fell down through a latteſs in his upper chamber that was in Samaria, and was ſick: and he ſent meſſengers, and ſaid unto them, go, enquire of Baal-zebub the God of Ekron, whether I ſhall recover of this diſeaſe.* If men will not be confined under God's limitation, but will know more than God hath revealed; or by other means than he thinks fit to diſcover by; or beſides what is within the compaſs of our rational faculties; if they will know any how, if God

will not, the devil ſhall: *this* I think, is ſuch a provocation in kind, that they which do ſo, cannot but expect that God ſhould take off his ſpecial protection againſt the devil: and let it be to them as they choſe. But ſaving in ſuch caſes, as theſe, it ſeems very rational to think, that *Satan* is limited, and that we are under the protection of God and his ſpecial providence againſt the devil; becauſe he is able to do us ſo little miſchief.

Thus I have run through all theſe rules, *viz.* that man is not here in an *adult* eſtate: neither is he here as he *ſhould be*, nor (if he well conſider it) as he *would* be: and there are many *appearances* in this ſtate that do repreſent him a common and ordinary creature; whereas in truth, man is a noble and generous creature, made for converſe with God himſelf, and fitted for the company of the angels in glory; whereby it plainly appears, that man is a much more valuable creature, than his eſtate in this world repreſents him to be. And that is the laſt argument for proof of the ſecond *propoſition*, that if you would make a right judgment of man, you muſt not only conſider him as to this ſtate, but alſo, to the future.

For the *cloſe* of this particular, I ſhall add a word or two of application. And,

1. If ſo be, there is leſs of man here, and more hereafter: if when we would take a right eſtimate of man, we muſt conſider him in reſpect of his *double eſtate*, hereafter, as well as here; then thoſe perſons are guilty of the greateſt madneſs and folly

that

that conſider themſelves only in order to *this life*; whereas theſe men have ſouls to ſave or to loſe; and there is another ſtate that will commence and begin after the expiration of this. Man who is now ſubject to uncertainty, mutability, and vanity; he ſhall be hereafter put into a ſettled condition. Wherefore, with the wiſe man, I ask this queſtion, *Prov.* xvii. 16. *Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wiſdom, ſeeing he hath no heart to it?* Since he hath neither wiſdom nor underſtanding to make advantage of it? This is the greateſt argument of folly, that men can be guilty of, like the fool in the goſpel, *Luke* xii. 19, 20, 21. to think of worldly proviſion, and accommodations great eſtates revenues, honours and dignity, riches and pleaſure; but not of being rich towards God. *Thou fool* (ſaith our Saviour) *this night thy ſoul ſhall be required of thee; then whoſe ſhall thoſe things be, which thou haſt provided*, Luke xii. 20. Certainly, he is a very careleſs and prodigal perſon, who ſpends all his portion to day, and leaves nothing for to-morrow. *Plutarch* ſpeaks of a man, who when he was in a languiſhing condition, and nature upon its utmoſt decay, comes to the phyſician to be cured of his *res dubia*, a petty inconvenience that hung upon his finger. There are many of this deſperate reſolution, as to ſay, *let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die*; and look no further. As they are wont to ſay, they will have *a ſweet life, though it be ſhort*: 'tis well if they could have their choice. But if there be a ſeparate exiſtence, and another ſtate to commence after this; and that this life is but preparatory to

that; then theſe men are guilty of the greateſt madneſs and folly. And of theſe men it may be ſaid, that they have their *immortal ſouls, only as ſalt to keep their bodies from ſtench and putrefaction*; they have their reaſonable faculties only to keep their bodies alive; and not for the great purpoſes of eternity; not for the ſenſe of a deity, and the contemplation of God; not for the purpoſe of adoring the ſupreme majeſty, and ſerving of him here, and reſembling of him in holineſs and righteouſneſs, which are the only things that put a value upon man.

2. My next inference from what hath been ſaid, is, that we ſhould not be *tempted* in this life, to do any thing to the *prejudice* of our future ſtate; the ſtate of eternity: but to let things be conſidered according to the true worth and value, leſt they find cauſe to repent, when it is too late, of the pleaſures they took in their unlawful actions. To do any thing to the prejudice of our immortal ſouls, is the greateſt folly that men can be guilty of. Let men be never ſo much admired and adored, yet they are guilty of the greateſt folly and madneſs, if they do not ſubordinate all the affairs and tranſactions of time, to ſerve the intereſt of their immortal ſouls. But this often happens to be our fate, or our fault, (I am ſure) and our folly: *we are all wiſe, but too many are wiſe too late.* Wherefore let me adviſe you to uſe your power and skill to do things in ſubordination and reference to the future account. Do that now, which will not burden conſcience; that will not contradict the ſenſe of your minds and underſtanding; that which is, and will be pleaſing and acceptable

acceptable to God. This is true wiſdom, and in this we ſhall have ſatisfaction for the preſent, and expectation to eternity. I would fain ask this rational queſtion, and leave it with you, doth the ſcripture declare concerning God, in whom there is all power, and liberty, *Jer.* xix. 24. That all his ways are ways of goodneſs, righteouſneſs, and truth? then ſhould not a man think, that it doth become him, and is fit on his part, that the *fruit of the ſpirit in him, ſhould be in all goodneſs, righteouſneſs, and truth*, Eph. v. 9. For, *this* is our religion, a divine participation, and to imitate him whom we worſhip. Let us always remember, that the actions of this preſent life are the matter of the future judgment; and that we ſhall be accountable for all thoſe actions which do proceed from the underſtanding of the mind, and liberty of the will; and that men may ſin by neglect of their faculties, as well as by abuſe of them. Now all thoſe actions that are capable of morality, are bound to be governed by moral principles; and the mind and underſtanding ought to be intent, ſo as to rule and govern them according to the reaſon of things. For we may ſin two ways, either by conſenting to that which ought not to be admitted; or by neglecting ourſelves, through want of care and due examination. An evil action ſhould never be done; but if upon any occaſion it be admitted, it ought preſently to be judged unfit, and to be condemned, rejected, and revoked by repentance, and the rule of right acknowledged. For whoſoever doth willingly commit evil, and doth not preſently revoke and diſclaim

diſclaim it, he is reckoned to own, and live in the ſin he hath committed, and to juſtify it: otherwiſe why doth he not revoke it? It is abſolutely neceſſary that this ſhould be done, or elſe we are not capable of God's grace and pardon; for we cannot put that upon God, to pardon contumacious and impenitent ſinners. If we do not revoke the evil which we have at any time committed; the guilt lies upon our conſciences, without any removal; and the malignity will affect our minds, without any remedy. Theſe are the inferences I have made from the firſt propoſition.

II. The ſecond propoſition, is that the ſtate of man in the life to come holds a *proportion* to his affairs in this life. We may eaſily judge, by what we now are, and by what we now do, how it ſhall be with us in the life to come. And this is fully laid down in the text *ſon, remember that thou in thy life-time receiveſt thy good things*, but didſt abuſe them to luxury and exceſs, to pamper thy body, to wantonneſs, pride, forgetfulneſs of God; and therefore, now thou art tormented. But *Lazarus* had evil things, but they became inſtruments of righteouſneſs, they brought him to modeſty, and ſelf-denial; therefore he is comforted. From which it plainly appears, that the ſtate of man in the world to come, holds a *proportion* to his affairs in this life. For explication.

1. Let it be underſtood, that I have no intention at all to ſpeak one word to countenance the creature's *merit* with God; for that I conceive to be incompatible to the condition of the higheſt angel in glory, properly to merit any thing at the hand

ınd of God ; and therefore not at all agreeable to e infirm, weak and crazy condition of man ; un- ſs you will uſe the word *mereri* in latin, in the ırmleſs ſenſe in which the ancient fathers did uſe , in which ſenſe it may paſs ; for that is no more an *conſequently to obtain* God's grace and favour. ut we are ſhy of the word, ſince it hath been ſo ıuch abuſed in the Roman church. And I take it) be above the capacity of any creature in the ighеſt altitude, properly to *merit* ought at the hand f God. And if ſo, they fail in the very fundamen- l, who tell us of a *treaſury of merit* in the church, ıat is partly ſupplied by the merit of ſaints depart- l this life, out of which there may be a ſupply for ıoſe that want.

Nothing can be given to God which is not due) him, nor that can be profitable to him ; and ıerefore there is no poſſibility of merit, in a ſtrict ınſe. Nothing can be given to God which was ot *his own* before ; and we have nothing that is roperly ours, but the conſent of our minds ; and confeſs, that is our free-will-offering, and our on- r ſacrifice, and all that we have to give, and that hich God requires at our hands, and that which od takes kindly, and doth accept, and will reward ith eternal recompence, *viz.* if we make God our elight and choice. For it is not worthy the name f religion that is not voluntary, wherein the heart f a man is not engaged, which is not the matter f his delight and choice. For to drudge in religi- n, is the baſeſt thing in the world ; and I would ever charge my conſcience with that, which I had ot reconciled firſt to the reaſon and judgment of

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my mind, and to the frame and temper of my ſoul. For it is not worthy the name of religion, that hath not the freedom of the judgment, and the conſent of the mind and will. And therefore we read, *my ſon, give me thy heart*, Prov. xxiii. 26. And, *thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and ſoul, and ſtrength*, Matth. xxii. 37. And this hath God enabled us to bring to him; it is but the uſe of his own talent; for he hath given us this great priviledge; and 'tis by the direction of one faculty, and by the uſe of another, that we determine ourſelves finally to God, that we do attain the utmoſt iſſue and improvement. But to prevent a miſtake; though it hold a proportion, yet not of merit, or deſert. But then,

2. Again, when I ſay, the ſtate of man in the world to come, holds a proportion to his affairs in this world; you muſt not underſtand it means *worldly circumſtances* of wealth, honour, or pleaſure; ſtrength, or worldly priviledges. For theſe are not conſiderable in that ſtate, nor will theſe be exiſtent in the future ſtate, nor will they be to meaſure by; for all theſe things paſs away, and vaniſh in time; neither are thoſe in conjunction with virtue and goodneſs; nor are they acquiſitions for which we are commendable. I remember, there is an excellent diſcourſe of *Ariſtotle*'s, Ariſt. Rhet. l. 1. c. 9. to ſhew upon what account men are commendable, and he reſolves, not for any thing that is not of a man's own acquiſition; nor for their excellent make, power, and faculties; not for the ſagacity of their underſtandings; but for the improvement

of

of their ſeveral powers and faculties. This, you know, is fulſome and nauſeous, for any one to be heard to commend himſelf, eſpecially for thoſe things that are not his own acquiſition. A man may ſay, I thank God, I have a healthy body, and a good eſtate, and the like; but theſe things do not make us valuable: but we are commendable only from thoſe things which we do acquire. And if a man is not praiſe-worthy for theſe things, they cannot be the ground of his future welfare, which are not the foundation of his preſent commendation, therefore in the *affirmative*.

Two things there are belonging to men in this ſtate, which are the meaſures of our happineſs in the future ſtate. (1.) The *internal diſpoſition*, and mental temper. And (2.) The *elicit acts*, which follow the temper, and are connatural to it; theſe are our acquiſitions, through the grace and aſſiſtance of God; which always is to be *underſtood* as principal to all good, though it be not always expreſſed; for all good is of God: therefore the meaſure of proportion, is the *internal diſpoſition* and temper, and the *elicit acts* that follow thereupon, and are connatural thereunto: therefore from what kind of *temper* and ſpirit a man is of here, and from what he *doth*, a man may gueſs how it ſhall be with him hereafter. If we are partakers of the grace of God, we ſhall be reconciled to the nature, mind, and will of God; and hereby we paſs into another ſpirit, that is, we have the ſame ſenſe and judgment of things that God hath, and the ſame motion and tendency: men do ſhew their ſpirits, by their words, and

and by their actions; by their carriage and behaviour; for we uſe to ſay, when men miſbehave themſelves, that *they ſhew their ſpirits*. And the like may be ſaid of men when they do well. So that I lay the meaſure of proportion, in the *frame and temper* of mens minds, and in the *elicit acts* of their ſouls; and theſe cannot be hindred by the devil, or by the world; for againſt Satan and all the world, I have the immediate acts of my mind, that which is my internal act, that which I affect, that which I chooſe and refuſe. I confeſs the *imperate acts* may be ſubject to divers impediments; a man may be diſturbed ſometimes, ſo that theſe may be quite contrary to the *elicit acts*: I mean, that which doth immediately proceed from a man's judgment and choice. To theſe, I ſay, the ſtate of men in the world to come is proportionable. And if men be now partakers of the divine nature, and led by an effectual entertainment of the goſpel, into a participation of the divine nature, and do act conformably thereunto; then in the future ſtate they ſhall adjoin themſelves with the angels of glory and the ſaints departed, to employ themſelves to eternity, in acts of acknowledgment of God, in adoration and admiration of him, in loving him, and taking pleaſure in him: and for this I will give you an account that it muſt be ſo.

1. From the *nature of the thing*: for *goodneſs* and *happineſs* are the ſame thing materially: in nature they are the ſame; as *malignity* and *miſery* are the ſame, in nature too. A man that is wicked, is neither wiſe nor happy, nor can be ſo. It is ſaid, *Rev.* xxii.

xxii. 14. *Bleſſed are they which do his commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life.* Mark the phraſe, *they have a right to the tree of life*, by being in this ſtate, by being in this temper, reconciled to the divine law.

2. From the *judgment of God*, and thoſe declarations which he hath made of himſelf in the ſcriptures; which every where declare, that he will render to every one according to right. *Rom.* ii. 6, 7, 8. *To them who by patient continuance in well-doing, ſeek for glory and immortality, eternal life. But to them which do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteouſneſs, indignation and wrath.* So that in this caſe God doth not uſe an arbitrary power, or do that which is not ſuitable and agreeable to the reaſon of things; but that which is fit in itſelf, and doth naturally follow, every way ſuitable and correſpondent to the reaſon of things and the right of the caſe. It is but juſt and fit that thoſe who live in an evil ſpirit, and exerciſe themſelves in ways of wickedneſs, that *theſe* ſhould be miſerable. So far are they miſtaken, who think that men in a way of evil and ſin, might be happy, if God pleaſed: for this cannot be; there is a repugnancy in the caſe; wickedneſs cannot but end in miſery. And on the other ſide, it is natural for goodneſs to bring men to happineſs. An evil-doer, unleſs he repent, comes not within a capacity of becoming happy; but by repentance, his ſtate is recoverable: but, ſaving in this way, it is neceſſary that he ſhould periſh. I ſhall now make an *inference* or two.

1. Then

1. Then let men look well to their *mental diſpoſitions*, and to their *moral actions*: *this* is of a mighty uſe in religion, to underſtand the true notion of moral actions. All thoſe are moral actions which ought to be governed by the reaſon of the mind and underſtanding; ſo that you exclude acts of non-attendancy, as if a man, when he is earneſt in diſcourſe, ſhould take up a ſtraw, without any conſideration: this were the *action of a man*, but not an *human action*: for he doth not attend to this, nor ought to do it. But that which he doth attend unto, and is an action of reaſon and judgment, this is a moral action; and every ſuch action either is an action of virtue or ſin: for if it be voluntarily committed, contrary to the right of the caſe, it is downright ſinful. Or if a man be careleſs and negligent in what he doth, it may be ſinful, becauſe it did not proceed from the judgment and underſtanding, directing and governing a man's will and choice. And this we may take for granted, in divinity from all the moraliſts, as well heathens, as others; in this explication we have the conſent of all the world. For though there may be things in their kind, of an *indifferent nature*, yet, when they come to be in particular, they are either good or evil, as they proceed from the judgment and underſtanding, and liberty of the will. Only we do exclude actions that are merely *natural*, and of *non-attendance*, as concoction, diſtribution, and the like: theſe are not ſubject to the government of mind and underſtanding: and therefore there is no morality, or immorality in theſe actions. Men in walking toge-

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her, are not guilty of ſin by looking backward, or forward, being intent upon diſcourſe; for that is but by the by; but what they ſay one to another; what they engage in, and undertake; how they behave themſelves towards one another; for theſe things they are accountable; becauſe herein they do well or ill. Thus having taken a liberty to make an explication of *moral actions*, and to free it from actions purely *natural*, and of non-attendance; let us therefore look well to all moral motions, becauſe theſe are the foundation of our future condition. For though a moral action be in itſelf tranſient, as any other action is, yet it hath a *virtual continuance*; as you ſee a felon, if he be taken many years after the fact, he may be arraigned and ſentenced, as well as if he had been taken immediately upon the act. And therefore, though the action paſs away with time; yet there is a continuation of it, and will hereafter be the foundation of reward or puniſhment. The pſalmiſt ſaith of good men, they *have diſperſed, they have given to the poor; their righteouſneſs endured for ever, their horn ſhall be exalted with honour*, Pſal. cxii. 9. But for a *ſinful action*, there is no other way to make it null, and void, but by repentance; and he that doth not repent, may be ſaid to live in it, to ſtand to and juſtify it: and being in the ſame ſpirit, and temper, will do the like again, if he have opportunity. Neither can we expect from God, that he ſhould forgive any man's ſin, that joins impenitency, and contumacy to it. Therefore it is highly adviſable for us, not to do that upon any temptation whatſoever, that will

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bring us to miſery if we do not repent and revoke it. Tho' it is true indeed, the penitent may ſay, *I am not the man I was*; I am not of the ſame mind and ſpirit I was; and were that to do again that I have done, I would not do it for ten thouſand worlds.

DISCOURSE XX.

The true Valuation of MAN.

LUKE xvi. 25.

But Abraham ſaid, ſon, remember that thou in thy life-time receivedſt thy good things, and likewiſe Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

2. WE may from what hath been ſaid, learn how much they deceive themſelves who hope to be hereafter in *another ſtate for kind*, than they are here. I acknowledge, we ſhall be all in another ſtate for *degree*; but verily, we ſhall be all in the *ſame ſtate for kind*. He that is *in a good ſpirit*, reconciled to God, and the rule of righteouſneſs, ſhall moſt fully harmonize with the nature, mind, and will of God, and with the rule of righteouſneſs, goodneſs, and truth. But he that is in the *ſpirit of the devil*, and filled with malice, hatred, rancour, and ill-will, ſhall have more of the ſame.

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For you read in the *Rev.* xvi. 9. that they in miſery *blaſphemed God which hath power over theſe plagues.* A man in the other ſtate, will be *more of the ſame*, or the ſame more intenſely. Thoſe that are in happineſs, will be more fully, according to the nature, mind, and will of God, in more perfect reconciliation with him, more perfectly ſubject to his will, and full conformity to him; will find no difficulty to comply with him. For it is the *ſame thing* we call grace and holineſs here, and happineſs hereafter, when God ſhall be all in all. And becauſe *this* is a mighty truth that I have inſiſted upon, I will ſhew it you from divers ſcriptures, which will warrant all that I have ſaid, *Matt.* xvi. 27. *For the Son of man ſhall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he ſhall reward every man according to his works*, Pſal. lxii. 12. *Unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: for thou rendereſt to every man according to his work.* Rom. ii. 6. *Who will render to every man according to his deeds.* To the like purpoſe, you have 1 *Pet.* i. 27. *Rev.* xx. 12. 13. *Rev.* xxii. 12. *God will bring every work into judgment*, Eccleſ. xii. 14. Rom. ii. 16. 2 Cor. v. 10. *Every man ſhall be judged according to that which he hath done in the body.*

From the words of the text, I ſhall obſerve briefly two things *more.*

Firſt, That *worldly proſperity* is no certain forerunner of future happineſs; for this is a thing heterogenial, and is from diſtinct and quite other cauſes. The providence of God which governs the world, and the laws of the kingdom of Chriſt, are quite differing things. And we expect happineſs

according to the laws of Chriſt, and his government; and do not proportion things of that ſtate according to the rules of common and ordinary providence. Alſo external things do very differently affect the minds of men: no man knows what may be the effect of worldly proſperity; for as it is uſed, it may tend to happineſs or miſery. Therefore, let us value things equally. True indeed, worldly proſperity hath an advantage, becauſe he that is rich, hath great opportunities of doing good, and tools to work with, if God give him an heart; but if he have not an heart to improve this advantage, he is not led into a divine ſpirit by it. And he that is in a ſtate of adverſity, and expoſed to neceſſity, he is ſubject to be envious, baſe, and ſordid. But if adverſity and a ſtraitned condition in the world make a man humble and modeſt, his poverty will tend much to his advantage. So that you ſee both of the one and the other, the operation is very uncertain; and therefore,

1. Let no man make himſelf a ſlave to that, which is no part of his happineſs. Let a man uſe moderate care for the things of this life, and be a good huſband; but not make himſelf a ſlave, and a drudge to acquire them.

2. Let him take his chief care about *that* which is in certain conjunction with *happineſs*, and that is the noble generous temper of his ſoul, and the elicit acts of his mind.

Secondly, We ſee from hence, that men change terms, circumſtances and conditions, one with another in the world to come. Here we have a *rich* man,

man, one that had plenty of all things in this world, comes to be miſerably tormented; and a *poor Lazarus* that was very neceſſitous, he comes to be comforted. For an account of this,

1. Things many times are *wrong here*; but they will not be wrong *always*. Things though force be upon them, are in ſome inclination to return to a right ſtate again. Now this is right, that it ſhould be well with thoſe that are good; and that they which are evil ſhould ſuffer evil. And things will never be at reſt, till it comes to be ſo; for like will have like; light will have light, and darkneſs meet with darkneſs. Thoſe that do evil, will ſuffer evil; and thoſe that do good, ſhall be happy.

2. The preſent work is to exerciſe virtue; this is a *probation-ſtate*; a ſtate of trial; and if ſo, there muſt be freedom and liberty of action. And therefore things are to be permitted to go on in confuſion; and men are to find ſome ſollicitations from the things of this world, contrary to the true inclination of virtuous ſouls. It is fit that virtue ſhould be expoſed to ſome difficulty, for this is a probation ſtate.

3. The final reſolution, and laſt ſtating of things is reſerved to another time, when no corrupt judge ſhall ſit; but he ſhall come that ſhall judge the world in righteouſneſs.

The *uſe* I will make of this, is,

1. Therefore, do *not envy* any one's condition; it is not ſafe though glory attend upon it for a while, *Pſal.* xxxvii. 1, 2. *Fret not thyſelf becauſe of evil doers, neither be thou envious againſt the workers of iniquity:*

quity : for they ſhall ſoon be cut down like the graſs, and wither as the green herb.

2. Satisfy thyſelf in thine *own condition*, if it be good and virtuous; for then it is ſafe. Thou art built upon a ſolid and laſting foundation; and that which will be final in thy ſtate, will compenſate for any trouble thou mayſt meet withal in this life.

3. Have a right notion and judgment of the *buſineſs of time*, which is to prepare for the future ſtate in. Time hath its order and reference to eternity, and is of no value in itſelf, but of the greateſt value in reſpect of the future. *The improvement of a little time, may be of gain to all eternity; and the loſs of a little time may be the greateſt loſs in the world.* Therefore let us conſider, what the improvement of time is. Look upon the world as a *ſtage* whereon man is at liberty to act; and what he doth now, will be of account hereafter. They that are *in a divine ſpirit*, and have no guilt upon their conſciences (through any evil voluntarily committed) they are free from internal trouble and torment, and from that inward vexation that men of evil minds and guilty conſciences ſuffer, even in this world. I do verily believe, that many a man that is tempted to envy men of great eſtates, if they were but ſenſible of the internal acts of their guilt, they would not change conditions with them. Let us have true ſentiments in ourſelves, for this is a ſolid ground of contentment to our minds, without which there is no happineſs. For if we have not quietneſs in our minds, we cannot be happy. There is no happi-

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neſs or peace but between the temper of our minds and the reaſon of things, and our compliance therewith, and with the everlaſting law of righteouſneſs, goodneſs, and truth.

I will *conclude* this diſcourſe, with theſe four inferences. Since it appears that there is *leſs* of man in this world; and that his future ſtate in the world to come, holds *proportion* to what is moſt himſelf, the temper of his ſpirit, and the courſe of his life, in this world.

1. Then it is *folly* and madneſs for men (as frequently they do) to eſtimate or conſider themſelves *wholly*, or *chiefly* by their affairs in this world, and by the good things thereof, ſuch as are power, riches, pleaſures.

This is juſt the caſe propoſed, *Prov.* xvii. 16. *A price in the hand of a fool, and no heart to it.* And the fatal miſcarriage, repreſented, *Luke* xii. 20. A fool over-provided for this world, and unprovided for the other, and his ſoul required hence on the ſudden.

This plainly, is to *ſet our eyes on that which is not. Prov.* xxiii. 5. For *riches make themſelves wings and fly away.* And all worldly elements periſh in their uſing, *Col.* ii. 22. And not only things themſelves, but all thoughts about them, occaſioned by them, periſh in a breath, *Pſal.* cxlvi. 4. vaniſh with the owner's breath.

All theſe things are ſo much *without us*, and ſo ſubject to the power of this vain and uncertain world, that they do not *make* us when they come, nor *mend* us while they ſtay, nor *undo* us when they are taken away.

They are chiefly an exercise and proof of virtue to us, as of moderation, and reference to God's will in the *getting* of them; of sobriety and charity in the *use* of them; and of patience, and acquiescence in the divine providence, in the *loss* of them.

That which is in value and worth far beyond them, and which should be so in our esteem, is the resolution of our minds concerning them; the composure, and established government of our spirits, a moderate indifferency as to the concernments of the world, and a submissive contentment in whatsoever the divine dispensation allots, *Phil.* iv. 11, 12, 13.

'Twas judgment and nobleness of spirit in the apostle, 1 *Cor.* vi. 12. *All things are lawful to me, but all things are not expedient. I will not be brought under the power of any thing*, &c. No worldly sovereignty or authority shall be over my mind.

'Tis worthiness of spirit to stand thus resolved: *Be the world what it will; let the things thereof, go or come, I will be my self*; not disturbed, not discomposed, not at a loss in respect of settlement and self-enjoyment.

2. Then it is the great concernment of our souls, not at all to admit of any temptation or suggestion, to do any thing in this life, to the *prejudice* of our state in eternity.

We are so wise and considerate in our worldly affairs, that we will not sell an estate in reversion, (which brings in no present profit, nor is ours in possession for the time being) but at a reasonable and valuable rate: which argues, that if we had faith

faith of things future, and were reſolved in our minds of the reality and certainty of them, we would do in *ſpirituals*, proportionably to what we do in *temporals*.

This is the great point of wiſdom, and ſhould be the over-ruling principle of life, to ſubordinate all to the end, to ſerve the intereſt of our ſouls in eternity, of all affairs and tranſactions of time. For what exchange for the ſoul loſt? *Matt.* xvi. 26. And the redemption of the ſoul ceaſeth for ever, *Pſal.* xlix. 8.

It were incredible, but that we have too great experience of it done; that men ſhould frequently force themſelves, abuſe their ſpirits, confound judgment of good and evil, lay waſte their conſciences by departure from the modeſty of human nature, and the holy rule of life, in anſwer to every call, to gratify humour, comply with fancy, ſatisfy luſt, to live (as licentious perſons phraſe it) *freely in the world*; whereas there is ſo great conſequence of all moral motion; and alſo men, by the uſe of themſelves, frame themſelves into a conſtitution and ſpirit and by their preſent determination, affectation and choice, lay foundation of a ſtate to continue in another world, not conſidering that an habitual diſpoſition is a *ſettlement* not eaſily altered, a fortification not ſo ſoon demoliſhed, a poſſeſſion of tedious and difficult recovery by way of ejectment; which when it is done, a long courſe muſt be run, of law and reaſon. *Matt.* i. 2, 29. Strength, armed in poſſeſſion, maintains itſelf againſt oppoſition and attempt, and commands all within doors into obedience. Nor

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is it eaſy to ſet on foot contrary practice. In ſuch a caſe, when men by bias and inclination are contrary bent, and confirmed by uſe, and cuſtom; againſt which a refuge of lies, (tho' too many betake themſelves to it) ſudden remorſe of conſcience, not ingenuouſly wrought, but enforced by the pain of a diſeaſe and ſickneſs, a colourable repentance on a death-bed, when the pleaſures of ſin can be no longer purſued, may ſeem too weak, and not leiſurely enough to prevail.

This indeed men reckon upon, to *compenſate* for their ill ſpirits and lives, but it hath little ſatisfaction of reaſon in it; and indeed, men in love with ſin, do but dally in point of amendment, are not deliberate or ſerious, and ſo lay ſtreſs fondly.

3. Then it is fairly knowable in *this ſtate*, and by ſomething thereof as a foregoing participation or ſign, what our ſtate and condition, for ſort and kind, *will be* in the world to come.

For in this world, God doth erect a ſtage, bring creatures thereon, prepare materials, lay a foundation: hereafter he will not fall on a new creation, and aboliſh this; nor do altogether a new thing in kind, when he removes his great and large family into the other world; but will do the work of another day upon, and concerning the former ſubject.

We will take the repreſentation of his work from ſcripture. *He will gather his wheat into his garner, and burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire*, Matt. iii. 12. which in the fulneſs of it, is done in the upſhot of his kingdom; however in degree, it may begin before. He

He will sort the *good seed* and the *tares* which grew in his field, by his permission, and patience till harvest; receiving his grain into his barn and remitting the tares to be burnt, *Matt.* xiii. 30.

He will take cognizance of his *guests*, rejecting those who trust themselves in, not having a wedding garment; entertaining those that are fitted, and suitably clothed: *Matt.* xxii. 13, 4.

He will admit the *wise virgins* with their trimmed lamps; and shut the door against the *foolish*, then found unprovided, and to seek, as we have it, *Matt.* xxv. 10, 12.

He will reckon with the *trustees* of his talents, and receive *good and faithful servants to the joy of their Lord*, but cast the *unprofitable into utter* darkness, *Matt.* xxv. 23, 30.

He will make difference, by *everlasting punishment and eternal life*, upon the account of neglect, and service, *Matt.* xxv. 46.

In all which *variety* of representations, we have an uniform relation both of ground and proportion: which doth settle, and ascertain the reference of time to eternity, and of the state of the one respectively to the other. For we may observe, that he still goes upon what was *before*, and according to the difference of the subject. Which also in scripture not clothed with allegory, is clearly declared. 2 *Cor.* v. 10. *We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to what he hath done, whether good, or bad*, 2 Thess. i. 8. *The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming*

flaming fire; taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he ſhall come to be glorified in his ſaints, and to be admired in all them that believe. And *this* to do, is ſaid to be a *righteous thing* on God's part, and a worthy and fitting thing to be done on man's part, *v.* 5, 6, 11. For the ſtate of the ſubject, the reaſon of the things, ground and proportion are indifferently obſerved. Which being ſo, we may have a *fore-ſight* of things future, from what we *now are*, and feel; whereas, of things perfectly new and never before, or altogether arbitrary and ſubject to will, there can be no fore-knowledge ariſing from ought of the things themſelves.

4. Then let us have *faith and patience* to go through the world withal; for the day draws on apace, for the ſtating and rectifying of things; the proportioning of recompence and reward to action, and the compleating and conſummating what is weak and imperfect for the preſent.

He is unreaſonably impatient, and haſty, who will not ſtay and expect the ſeaſon of the year, and what that brings; but mutters and complains of injury, and hard meaſures, becauſe he cannot have harveſt in ſeed-time.

Tho' an inheritance fall to a perſon not at years, or a parent will by benevolence to his child, antevert his own deceaſe, and prepoſterouſly make him heir *per voluntatem* before-hand, who is to be *per naturam* in ſucceſſion (as *Charles* the V. king of *Spain* and

and the *Netherlands*, diſtinguiſh'd in his ſpeech to his ſon *Philip*, when he ſurrendered his kingdoms to him, having before ſurrendered his empire of *Germany* to his brother *Ferdinand*) yet the general Law which in common looks at particulars, and only aims at minors advantage and ſecurity, admits not an undoubted heir at law, the power, or liberty of diſpoſe in his incomplete ſtate, leſt thro' immaturity, or inexperience, he conſent to what after-wiſdom would chooſe to have otherwiſe. Neither is this *remora*, or detention eſteemed matter of tyranny, or a grievance, but meets with equal compliance, being a proviſion of ſecurity.

Scriptures and experience of ages ſhew us, that *ingentia dei opera magnam patiuntur moram.* God takes a large compaſs to bring about his great works. Shall not we acknowledge God's priviledge, and yield to his pleaſure, by being content to ſtay till the time appointed of our heavenly father, *Gal.* iv. 2.

He deals very unequally with God, from whoſe goodneſs and bounty we expect all things of faith and hope, for matter and ſubſtance; who will not permit to his liberty, circumſtances of time and place. We are wont to ſay, to perſons who gratify us, *take your own time*: and we ſtay with patience, and receive with kind acceptance.

I doubt not, but as God in the world of nature, hath *fitted one thing to another*, as the wiſe man obſerves, *Eccl.* vii. 14. whereby vanity, deformity and ineptitude to the end are excluded, which might extend to the maker's reproach, as failing in skill, or goodneſs; ſo will he alſo in the *intellectual world* of

of ſouls and ſpirits, finally *proportion* capacities and ſtates (for the other world will be admirable for congruities) and fit moral actions and diſpoſitions with recompence and reward, that no challenge may befal his ſuperintendency, and government.

DISCOURSE XXI.

The Neceſſary REPENTANCE of a SINNER.

ISAIH i. 16.

Waſh ye, make ye clean, put away the evil of your doings, &c.

TWo things are neceſſarily to be acknowledged and ſuppoſed to encourage motion in religion, endeavours after piety, and application to God.

Firſt, To know and be aſſured, that God will not be wanting to afford the aſſiſtance of his grace and ſpirit.

Secondly, That by this aſſiſtance of God's grace and ſpirit, we are enabled to do our duty. That God doth afford his aid and aſſiſtance; and that by this we are enabled to do our duty, and that which God requires of us; theſe two things are neceſſary for us to believe and underſtand, to ſtrengthen

ſtrengthen our hands in our work, and ſo encourage us in good endeavour, and to make application to God, or elſe we ſhall fall into one of theſe two inconveniencies.

Firſt, We ſhall be ready to ſay or think, that God doth *reproach* us when he doth ſeem to exhort us, and that he doth as it were but mock at us, in our miſery and neceſſity, when he ſpeaks moſt kindly to us; than which, nothing is more unworthy the divine goodneſs. This is to do ſomething like that which St. *James* doth reprove, *James* ii. 16. for one to ſay to a brother or a ſiſter, that is naked and deſtitute of food, *be ye warmed and filled*, but gives them not thoſe things that are neceſſary for the body. Now I ask, can we think that God will do that himſelf, which he finds fault with in others? Is there not quite another repreſentation made of God, *Pſal.* ciii. 13. That God pities them that fear him, as a father doth his children: becauſe that he knoweth their frame, and remembers that they are but fleſh.

By which the prophet would teach us, that God doth make allowance for our advantage, and that he is full of compaſſion, and that it is far from him to make a ſhew of that, which he doth not mean; this being a thing ſo horrid, that no perſon among us of any fairneſs, candour, or ingenuity, is guilty of; and when any one is found out, to ſpeak that which he did not mean, and intend to perform; he is the more diſreliſhed and avoided. Or elſe,

Secondly, That the exhortations that are in ſcripture are to *no purpoſe*, and ſhall take no effect; all

all which doth ill reflect upon God, and miſrepreſents him to his creatures, and diſcourages our application to him, and is apt to take us off from following after God, and laying hold of him, as the phraſe is, *Prov.* iii. 18. of wiſdom, *lay hold of her, let her not go, for ſhe is thy life.* Should we believe any thing of this nature, concerning God, it would be ſo great a diſcouragement, that we ſhould let all alone, and not think ourſelves greatly concerned to act in a way of religion.

For I remember the great *philoſopher* hath obſerved, * That no man, in point of wiſdom, tho' he be concerned never ſo much, will take into conſideration things that are impoſſible.

There are two things which no wiſe man doth ſubmit to his own care or thought, and they are *neceſſaries*, and *impoſſibles*. For things *neceſſary*, he needs not charge himſelf with them; for they will be done of courſe; and for things *impoſſible*, it is a vain thing for him to undertake; for they cannot be done by him, or any power whatſoever. Wherefore we are not to conceive ourſelves to be in the ſtate of impoſſibility; therefore we muſt ſuppoſe, that God is with us by his grace and aſſiſtance; and while God is with us, that we are able to do thoſe things that he requires of us, *to waſh and make us clean, and to put away the evil of our doings.* Which words are to be conſidered,

Firſt, According to their *form*.

* Ariſt. Rhet. l. 1. c. 4.

Secondly,

Secondly, According to their *matter*.

1. According to their *form*, they are an *exhortation*; and ſo for that purpoſe, I have made choice of them to ſet on a former argument: it having been made appear, that God is not wanting in neceſſaries, nor doth forſake till he be forſaken, and that it is not in vain, that we are exhorted to our duty.

2. As the words may be conſidered in reſpect of the *matter*, they afford theſe two obſervations.

Firſt, That *ſin* is, in itſelf, a thing of defilement and pollution.

Secondly, That *religion* is a motion of reſtoration, or this is religious motion, *to waſh and make us clean, and to put away the evil of our doings.*

But that which I ſhall inſiſt upon, is to conſider theſe words as an *exhortation* made by an inſtrument of God, one that God did aſſume, own, and ſtand by; and therefore we may imagine that God was preſent with this exhortation, and that thoſe who were thus exhorted, not only ought, but *might* do ſomething in anſwer to this exhortation: for no intelligent agent acting in a way of wiſdom, as the all-wiſe God always doth, would call any one to that which he knew was not in his power to do: and therefore we muſt not attribute any ſuch thing to the all-wiſe God. No man of wiſdom and underſtanding, does either himſelf attempt, or call upon others to do that, which neither he, nor they are able to do.

We do therefore conclude, that when God calls upon perſons to do any thing, he doth afford neceſſary

ſary aſſiſtance, by which they are enabled to obey and do the thing he commands. In *Ezek. chap.* xxxvii. we find God to ask this queſtion of the prophet, *can theſe dry bones live?* the prophet gives a wiſe anſwer, *O God thou knoweſt*, intimating that by the power of nature it could not be done; but if God would make uſe of his power (as we read he did) then it was poſſible; for he calls to the wind to blow and bring bone to his bone, and cauſed fleſh and ſinews to cover them; by which means, he cauſed dead and dry bones to live. In common philoſophy we determine, that ſome things cannot be done, but then we confine it to the power of nature: but by the power of God, things that are impoſſible to be done by the power of nature, may be done. The like inſtance is of *Lazarus*, he was dead, and had been dead for ſome time; yet our Saviour calls to *Lazarus*, and bids him *come forth*, John xi. 43. Now as I before hinted to you, the way of motion in intellectual nature, is different from the way of motion in inferior nature: In intellectual nature, the way of motion is to propoſe, declare and ſhew, to excite by reaſon and argument, to warn, to admoniſh, to foretell, to convince, to promiſe, to threaten, to reward, to puniſh, to enlighten the underſtanding, to move the will, to affect the conſcience, and the like. Theſe are the ways of motion in intellectual nature; now, he who by his voice doth rend the rocks, and make mountains to quake and tremble: he doth alſo, when he pleaſeth, melt and break the ſtony heart; but then it is in *this* way, as it is remarkable what

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we read, *Gen.* ix. 27. God perſuaded *Japhet to dwell in the tents of Shem.* And it is paſſion in a way of perfection, thus to receive from God; or, as we call it, to *ſuffer under divine motion*: and it is conſervative of our liberty and freedom, and moſt natural for a creature, that is made intelligent and voluntary, thus to admit the creator's touch. Every creature according to its nature, is affected, moved, and ſuffers under God. Now intellectual nature is moved in this way, in a way of illumination, perſuaſion, mental conviction and ſatisfaction; for this you muſt know and underſtand, that intellectual nature, remaining ſuch, cannot be diveſted of intelligence and freedom; for thoſe are its neceſſary and eſſential perfections, and a man ceaſeth to be a man, if diveſted of *theſe*, and turned out of intellectual nature; he ceaſeth to be a man. But as long as he is a man, he cannot be without the neceſſary perfections of human nature intelligence and liberty.

That which may be ſaid in this caſe is, that ill habits do ſtrangely byaſs, and incline our faculties: but tho' they do this, yet they do not abſolutely determine our faculties, or ſink them: for theſe faculties are of the eſſence of our ſouls. I confeſs 'tis with much difficulty, they are to be overcome; for the prophet *Jeremiah* ſaith, that they which are *accuſtomed to do evil can no more do well*, than the *blackmoor can change his skin, or the leopard his ſpots*, Jer. xiii. 2, 3. which repreſents the difficuty to be even morally impoſſible, and not to be done without great difficulty; but yet no habit doth abſolutely determine any faculty; but the faculty is free notwith-

ſtanding any habit acquired, or never ſo long in poſſeſſion: otherwiſe it were impoſſible ever to recover any habitual ſinner, which, thanks be to God through his grace, proves ſometimes otherwiſe. And of this we have many inſtances in ſcripture, of perſons that have been ſhot into the world, and in very hazardous employments, as *ſitting at the receipt of cuſtom*, who were odious to the *Jews* becauſe of their very employment, perſons ranked with ſinners; yet upon our Saviour's call, they left all and followed him: you have alſo an account by the divine author to the *Hebrews*, of *Abraham*, Heb. xi. 8. That he did leave his country and all his friends, and acquaintance and worldly intereſt, and obeyed the heavenly call, *not knowing whither he went*: there is ſuch an impreſſion on the mind of man, but in a way ſuitable to intellectual nature, that doth carry them on as effectually, as the ſeveral creatures by an impreſſion made upon them, gathered themſelves to *Noah* into the ark, *Gen.* vii. 7. &c.

But now I ſhall proceed to give you an account of three things; only let me put you in mind of the ſaying of an eminent perſon, and it is this, That *it is better to have no opinion of God, than to have an unworthy opinion of him* * for if you have no opinion of him, it is ſimple unbelief, but if you have an unworthy opinion of him, it is to uſe him with contumely and diſhonour. When God calls upon men to repent and turn *to him*, and thereby declares himſelf favourable, and that he will admit men to his favour and grace; not only that they ſhall meet with entertainment

* Plutarch de ſuperſtitione.

entertainment if they do come, but alſo that he will afford ſuch grace and aſſiſtance that they may come. To think that God means otherwiſe than he expreſſes himſelf, is to think worſe of God, than any good-natured and ſober perſon would be thought of, or doth deſerve. Therefore if we are called upon by God, *to waſh and make ourſelves clean*, theſe words do import, that God is in readineſs, and will contribute neceſſary aſſiſtance, and thro' his grace and aſſiſtance we may do that which he requires of us.

And that I may fully ſtate this matter, I will do it in theſe *three* particulars.

Firſt, I will ſhew, that God doth primarily deſire the *good* of all his creatures.

Secondly, That he doth not deſire man's ſalvation without his *return*.

Thirdly, That he doth not deſire man's return, without his own *conſent*.

Firſt, God doth primarily *deſire* the *good* of all his creatures; elſe I pray you what can you make of theſe ſcriptures, that God *would have all men to be ſaved and to come to the knowledge of the truth*, 1 Tim. ii. 4. He ſaith, *what would I have done more for my vineyard that I have not done:* Iſa. v. 4. Can he ſay this, who doth not that which is neceſſary and requiſite on his part: *Why will ye die*, ſaith God to the houſe of *Iſrael*: Ezek. xviii. 31. The anſwer were eaſy, if God were wanting in neceſſaries to his creatures; can he be ſaid in good earneſt to deſire any thing, that doth nothing of that which is within his power to effect it.

When

When God ſaith that *thy deſtruction is of thy ſelf*: Hoſ. xiii. 9. if ſome doctrines be true, may not it be ſaid, *no, it is of thee*, becauſe I am under an abſolute neceſſity of being deſtroyed? The *wiſe man* ſaith, That *God hateth nothing that he hath made*; Wiſd. xi. 14. but his love is very little, if he doth nothing to ſecure his creation. To what purpoſe is that exhortation of our Saviour, *Matth.* xi. 28. *Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you reſt*, if men cannot come unto him? And alſo blame is laid upon men that *they would not come unto him, that they might have life*, John. v. 40. Could not they which were ſo perverſe, if they had imagined ſuch a thing as this, of God's being wanting to his creatures in neceſſaries, eaſily have retorted theſe words upon our Saviour? *Prov.* i. 31. It is ſaid, *I called, but ye refuſed to come; I cried, but ye gave me no anſwer*. But further let us conſider the *means* that God has provided for our recovery. The ſcripture expreſly ſaith, that Chriſt *taſted death for all men*, Heb. ii. 9. and declares that he is a *propitiation, not only for our ſins, but for the ſins of the whole world*, John. ii. 2.

Nothing more certain, than that God had no hand in making any of thoſe three things, in reſpect of which we are liable and in danger to eternity, to wit, *ſin*, *death* and *hell*. And this hath been acknowledged, as you read, *God made not death*, Wiſd. i. 13. And in another place, *God made not hell*. Theſe are not of God's product, they are not things of God's intention, they are not things that God decreed, deſigned, or contrived. He never laid the

the foundation of any of theſe; but they are conſequent upon degeneracy, defection and apoſtacy; as it is expreſs'd, *the backſlider in heart ſhall be filled with his own ways*; Prov. xiv. 14. He ſhall reap the fruit of his own doings. But here I muſt anſwer an *objection*, and it is this:

If God were ſo well-minded toward men, and ſo much deſired their good and welfare, why did he not prevent ſin, and make it impoſſible that ever ſin ſhould enter into the world; ſince he hath wiſdom enough, and power enough to prevent it? To this I will reply three things.

Firſt, Can we blame God, that he doth not pervert the order of *ſecond cauſes?* Is this a failure in God, that he ſuffers ſecond cauſes to act that which is proper to them? If God doth make a voluntary and intelligent agent, it doth neceſſarily follow, unleſs he fruſtrate his own workmanſhip, that he muſt ſuffer a voluntary agent to act according to his own will.

If this do not ſatisfy, I add in the *ſecond* place; can we blame God, that he did appoint a *probation-ſtate*, which could not have been, unleſs man had been left free and voluntary; eſpecially conſidering that in this probation-ſtate, God was not wanting in thoſe things, that were requiſite and fit for this creature, that was put in a ſtate of probation and trial, preparation and exerciſe: and if this will not ſatisfy; I ſhall add a

Third, And that will put all out of doubt; and that is this; that all thoſe things conſidered, which are the proviſion of God; man (to ſay no more) is

more ſufficient to his effect, and the purpoſes of his creation, than any other creature whatſoever: I ſay, conſidering the *proviſion* of God, and the accompliſhments of man in that ſtate; man is no leſs ſufficient to his effect, than any creature to the effect of his own nature. For, as that to which man is called and required, is of a higher nature, than any other creature below him; ſo alſo are his faculties and principles higher and nobler; and there is over and above theſe, the aſſiſtance of grace, which is ſupernatural, and more than is due to him. This is ſuch an aſſiſtance as is able to raiſe a man to that which is ſupernatural, and to fit him for the ſtate of glory; and yet you ſee inferior nature is ſufficient to its end and it hath not failed, and we are confident that it will not fail. Now, why a *man* that is inveſted with nobler principles ſhould not act at a higher rate, according to theſe principles and endowments, is a thing not to be anſwered: And that he ſhould ſit ſtill, and ill reflect upon God in undutifulneſs and unthankfulneſs, is without the leaſt appearance of reaſon in the world. And this is enough to vindicate the honour of our maker. But then,

Secondly, We cannot ſay, that God deſires any man's ſalvation without his *return*. For it is repugnant and impoſſible, that any man ſhould be happy in a way of obſtinacy and rebellion againſt God, that ſhall live in contradiction to his maker. For can any man be happy in conjunction with his enemy, in a ſtate unnatural to him, where he hath no harmony, takes no pleaſure and ſatisfaction? It cannot

cannot be that a man ſhould be ſaved, unleſs he return; for theſe terms cannot ſtand together, to live in oppoſition and contradiction to God, and yet to be reconciled to him, and to be made happy by him. If we live in ſin, and take delight therein; we cannot take delight in the moſt righteous God. You may as ſoon conjoin light and darkneſs, *Chriſt* and *Belial* together. So that you cannot ſay, that God deſires a thing which is ſo abſurd and contrary to all reaſon, that any ſhould be brought to happineſs without reſtoration, and return to God.

Thirdly, Neither can we ſay, that God deſires man's return without his own *conſent*; for if he ſhould deſire this, he ſhould deſire that which cannot be: for being intelligent and voluntary agents, we cannot truly be ſaid to do that, which we do againſt our minds. For to an human act two things are neceſſary; that there be the *judgment of reaſon* in the underſtanding, and the *choice of the will*. If the mind do not conſent, 'tis not a free act; and if not done freely and of choice, it cannot be an act of virtue; and if not an act of virtue, it cannot be of any moral conſideration. That God that doth graciouſly allow for all our involuntary weakneſſes, imperfections, and failings, being ſurpriſed and diverted from our duty; yet he will not diſpenſe with the want of two things; ſincerity, that is honeſt-meaning and intention; and the act of our will; without theſe, he will not be ſatisfied nor in the leaſt diſpenſe; and this is called in ſcripture, a *perfect heart*, 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. where a man doth honeſtly intend and mean. My *ſon give me thy heart*,

Prov.

Prov. xxiii. 26. *And* if there be a *willing mind*, 2 Cor. viii. 12. *'tis accepted* of God, whether the gift be more or leſs; yea, if there be honeſt meaning and hearty intention in the perſon; that which is not accepted in the matter, is accepted in the perſon. Thou did'ſt well *that it was in thy heart*, to build me a houſe, 1 *Kings*. viii. 18. tho' God would not ſuffer him to build it. And when the *tabernacle* was to be built, God would not receive ought from any one but thoſe that brought it with a willing mind. *Not by conſtraint, but willingly*. Exod. xxxv. 5. *And they ſhall be a willing people in the day of my power*, Pſal. cx. 3.

But that I may give ſatisfaction to ſome good minds that are full of doubtfulneſs, becauſe at firſt they are not ſo voluntary, free and willing; and becauſe they are fain to ſtrive much with themſelves, here I ſay, *'tis no leſs an act of the will, though a man be at the firſt attempt unwilling and averſe*; yea though he ſuffer great difficulty to bring himſelf to it; this is no leſs a willing act, than if he were at firſt more willing. For this man hath wrought himſelf to it by reaſon, conſideration, and argument; and ſo his conſent is the better grounded.

Therefore, if a man do find an averſation and indiſpoſition, and he doth ſuffer difficulty by that which riſeth up againſt him; yet if he takes pains with himſelf, and begs God's aſſiſtance, and takes his duty into conſideration, and by reaſon and argument brings himſelf to conſent; this man is rather more willing than he that did it with more eaſe, and more ſuddenly; for here is the more deliberate

liberate conſent becauſe of the former averſeneſs and indiſpoſition; and therefore we may encourage ourſelves, tho' at firſt we find ſome averſion and indiſpoſition and unwillingneſs; yet if we conquer and overcome them, it is a true act of virtue, becauſe of theſe difficulties and incumbrances.

But that cannot be imputed to us, in which we do not conſent; for if we act againſt our mind, it is not our act; for in all human actions, it is requiſite that there be the judgment of reaſon in the underſtanding, and the choice of the will.

But to *conclude*, *firſt*, things of *impurity*, the holineſs of God will not ſuffer him to have a hand in; as for inſtance, to make a man happy that is unholy and wicked: and therefore it is neceſſary in the nature of the thing, that renovation and ſanctification go before ſalvation. And,

Secondly, Things *inconſiſtent*, the wiſdom of God doth engage him againſt; for he that is wiſe, will never engage himſelf in things that cannot be done. Now this is inconſiſtent, for a man to act againſt his will. There are two acts of a man, the exterior, and the interior: the *exterior* act of a man, that may be forced; but this is leſs the act of a man than that which is *interior*, and this can never be forced by any one whatſoever; neither do the laws of God or man charge that upon us, which we neither will nor conſent unto. If a man fall into the hands of thieves, who force him along with them, and make him preſent while they commit a wicked fact; the law will not make him a partaker, becauſe his perſon was expoſed to violence. Unleſs a man

man hath conſented, he is not obnoxious, neither in the ſenſe of God's law, nor the laws of men.

The *exterior* man, is ſubject to exterior force, becauſe he cannot reſiſt a power that is too ſtrong for him; but the *interior* man is free againſt all the world; nothing without us can force conſent. A man may diſſent tho' his perſon be in durance, and tho' his tongue ſhould be made to ſpeak, and his hand to write, and his feet to walk. Where the exterior man is under force, both God and man hold him excuſed. It is the act of the interior man that God doth reckon upon, and here he expects conſent. So that you ſee, God doth not deſire any man's return without his *conſent*; for indeed, if he do not conſent, he doth not return.

God, who is an infinitely wiſe agent, and firſt mover, he doth apply himſelf to his ſeveral creatures proportionably to their qualities and ſtate; and as I ſaid, when he doth apply himſelf to an intelligent agent, the way of motion is by way of reaſon, as to propoſe, declare, to ſhew, to excite, *&c.* But intelligent nature, continuing ſuch, cannot be diveſted of freedom and liberty; and therefore the application that muſt be made to it, muſt be by illumination, perſuaſion, mental conviction and ſatisfaction; and this is as ſufficient and available to intellectual nature, as any application in any other way, can be to a natural agent: and you may as well blame an intellectual agent if it be not admoniſhed, perſuaded, and ſatisfied, when reaſon is offered; as you may blame an inferior nature, if it ſhould be wanting to its proper effect.

I ſhall now for *application*, infer two things.

Firſt, That we ought to be *thankful* to God, and to acknowledge him, for the gracious *aſſiſtance* that he doth afford unto us: for this will be argument enough againſt us at the day of judgment, that we were admoniſhed, exhorted, ſhewn, taught; all which would have been in vain, if we were not able to hear God's voice, and to obey him. That is therefore the firſt inference, that we do duly *acknowledge God*, and be thankful unto him for the gracious aſſiſtance that he doth afford us.

The *ſecond* is this, that we do *make uſe of*, and employ this divine aſſiſtance; which is in the apoſtle's language, 2 *Cor.* vi. 1. *Not to receive the grace of God in vain:* And this we do, when the principle is without effect.

DISCOURSE XXII.

The EXERCISE and PROGRESS of a CHRISTIAN.

PHILIPPIANS iii. 12.

Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which alſo I am apprehended of Chriſt Jeſus.

I Obſerve out of theſe words three things.

1. Where the apoſtle profeſſeth his *faith*, there he

he teſtifieth his *humility.* In the 11 verſe he did declare his *faith* and future expectation; *If by any means I may attain to the reſurrection of the dead.* Here he declares his humility, *not as tho' I had already attained, or were perfect,* &c.

2. Where he doth teſtify his *humility,* there he doth engage himſelf to *care and diligence. But I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which alſo I am apprehended.*

3. Where he doth engage himſelf to *diligence,* there he doth take notice of the *grace of God. If that I may apprehend,* &c. And ſo you ſee that his faith of the reſurrection is accompanied with an humble ſenſe of his own ſhortneſs, and purſued with great activity, induſtry, care and diligence.

In purſuit of theſe propoſitions, I ſay theſe three things.

1 The faith of God, humility of ſpirit, and active care and diligence in the affairs of our ſalvation, are things that are united in the common root of truth and goodneſs.

2. They do *comply with each other* in their nature and diſpoſition.

3. They *mutually promote* each other in their ſeveral operations.

If you ask, what are the great things in religion? I will refer you to three texts of ſcripture: For that which is properly chriſtian, *Put on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt:* Rom. xiii. 14. For that which is a proper creature-diſpoſition, *Be cloathed with humility,* 1 Pet. v. 5. For that which is our work and buſineſs in time, *Work out your own ſalvation with fear and*

and diligence. Phil. ii. 12. *He that puts on Chriſt* muſt put off himſelf; for the image and form of Chriſt is ſelf-denial; for Chriſt put himſelf in the form of a ſervant, and a ſervant parts with his own will. He that will be like unto Chriſt, muſt live in entire ſelf-ſurrender; and ſo ſaith the apoſtle, *As the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on humbleneſs of mind, meekneſs, long-ſuffering,* &c. Col. iii. 12. *In lowlineſs of mind let each eſteem other above himſelf,* Phil. ii. 3. They that are *Phariſaically conceited,* muſt be unbelievers; for do any of the *Phariſees believe on him?* John. vii. 48. For, as pride and conceit do ill affect the ſubject in which it is, ſo it doth alienate from God; *For God reſiſteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble,* Jam. iv. 6. There is no better preparation for faith, than humility; *for the humble he will teach,* Pſal. xxv. 9. And the humble hath ſubmitted himſelf to be *a fool, that he may be wiſe,* 1 Cor. iii. 18. But the proud is in an indiſpoſition, and horrid contradiction and oppoſition to faith: For this is the proud man's ſenſe and language, if I may allude to the tree, *Judges* ix. 9. *Shall I leave my fatneſs?* So ſaith the proud man, ſhall I relinquiſh all confidence in the good things of nature, my excellent gifts, my parts, my acquirements, improvements, my education, employment, my ſeveral virtues and great endowments, and various performances, my merit whereby I do tranſcend others; and ſhall I come to be beholden to any one? This was the temper of the proud *Phariſee, this people that know not the law are curſed.* John vii. 49. It doth not become ſuch as

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we are, to give up our confidence, and wholly to renounce and diſclaim our ſelves. It is the humble, and modeſt, and ingenuous ſpirit that is the ready believer; and we have many teſtimonies for this, *Luke* vii. ſaith our Saviour, *I have not found ſo great faith, no not in Iſrael.* Of whom doth our Saviour ſpeak this? Look the beginning of the chapter, and you ſhall find it of the *centurion*, whom the *Jews* reported to be worthy for whom he ſhould do courteſy; he having done gallantly for their nation, *and built them a ſynagogue.* But he ſaith, that he was *not worthy that our Saviour ſhould come under his roof.* Of this man it is that our Saviour ſaith, that *he had not found ſo great faith, no not in Iſrael.* I make this further out in two particulars.

1. They that are humble and modeſt, are in a due *diſpoſition* and *fitneſs* of mind for the belief of divine things; for *the full ſoul loatheth the honey-comb*, Prov. xxvii. 7. Thoſe that are in a diſpoſition to come to our Saviour, are thoſe that are *weary and heavy laden*, Matth. xi. 28.

2. Theſe have the advantage of God's promiſe; for it is ſaid, That *God will look to him that is of an humble and contrite ſpirit*, Iſa. lvii. 15. And theſe are the perſons that God will take care of, and inſtruct. *The humble he will lead in judgment, the meek he will teach his way*, Pſa. xxv. 9. So that theſe, and theſe only are the children of promiſe. But thus much for explication.

To make ſome improvement of this for the *juſtification of religion*, as the apoſtle ſaith, *Rom.* iii. 4. *Let God be true, and every man a liar.* Let not the

the unbelief of ſome, make the faith of God of none effect: ſo in this caſe, let not the miſcarriage of ſome who pretend to believe, tend to the diſcredit of our religion; but let us reſolve that the troubleſome, proud, and ſelf-conceited; that the wilful, boiſterous, and tempeſtuous ſtorming tempers be reputed falſe in their profeſſion. For the chriſtian temper and ſpirit is modeſt and humble, ſenſible of its own ſhortneſs and imperfections, and want of growth; and knows its own dependence upon God both for the grace of favour and acceptance, as alſo for the grace of aid and aſſiſtance. Therefore let every one that profeſſeth his faith, give proof of his *humility*. By this means we ſhall diſcharge religion from all imputation: for if any one that profeſſeth chriſtianity, be of a proud, troubleſome, haughty, inſolent, contentious, quarrelſome and unquiet ſpirit, let him be reputed falſe to his profeſſion; but let religion be *juſtified*; for the chriſtian ſpirit is modeſt, humble, ſenſible of its own wants and imperfections; it is a calm mind, a gentle and benign ſpirit, and ſo the ſcripture ſpeaks of it; *A good converſation with meekneſs of wiſdom.* *Jam.* iii. 13. and *ver.* 17. *The wiſdom that is from above, is pure and peaceable, gentle, eaſy to be entreated, full of righteouſneſs and good fruits.* *The fruit of the ſpirit is love, joy, peace, long-ſuffering, gentleneſs, goodneſs, meekneſs,* &c. Gal. v. 22. *With all lowlineſs and meekneſs, with long-ſuffering, forbearing one another in love.* Eph. iv. 2. I do wonder how any man that profeſſeth himſelf a chriſtian, can read theſe plain texts of ſcripture, and maintain himſelf in ſelf-will, ſelf-conceit,

conceit, or gratify his own humour, imagination and fancy, prefer himſelf before his brethren, be boiſterous, tempeſtuous and troubleſome in the place where he lives. For either this man, notwithſtanding his profeſſion, is not a chriſtian; or elſe theſe perſons were miſtaken that put theſe characters down in holy ſcripture. No certainly, we are not to allow and eſteem him a chriſtian, that is haughty, arrogant and ſelf-conceited; for no principle in the world lays ſuch ground of modeſty and ſoberneſs of ſpirit and temper, as the chriſtian religion doth. And nothing is more unnatural to the true ſpirit of religion, than a proud and haughty mind; for this of all things is moſt ſcandalous to it. 'Tis eaſier a great deal to bear the ſcorn and contempt of the irreligious, than the inſolency, forwardneſs, and ſelf-conceitedneſs of ſelf-flattering profeſſors.

We may, and ought to prefer the modeſt, gentle, calm ſpirit, that we find in ſome ſtill and quiet believers, before the arrogant, cenſorious, ſelf-aſſumer; and have reaſon to believe, that there is more of God and of the chriſtian profeſſion in the modeſt ſtill, quiet ſpirit, who makes no noiſe in the world, who are rather to God than to men; and that they are more noble-ſpirited, and better chriſtians than the other. I will give you a demonſtration of this, becauſe that temper I have been ſpeaking againſt, is that which brings a reproach upon chriſtianity. Profeſſors of religion are thought to be troubleſome to the world, and incendiaries; and where men are proud, arrogant, and ſelfiſh, and allow themſelves in ſelf-will, they are ſo indeed: but

but theſe are not in the higheſt form of chriſtianity. For divine truth, ſublime reaſon, and tried notions of things, are to be found as the comely ornament of an humble ſpirit, and in ſouls ſubdued to God. *Theſe*, and theſe only, have a right ſenſe of things, and are capable rightly to eſtimate and judge. A generous notion will not lodge in a haughty, preſumptuous breaſt: for theſe are not cool enough for wiſdom to enter into their ſouls; for wiſdom is the fruit of deep ſearch, and ſerious conſideration; and *he that knows moſt, thinks he has moſt ſtill to learn.* They are the empty veſſels that make the greateſt noiſe. We need no other diſcovery of conceitedneſs than its own expreſſion and behaviour; they are always talkative, cenſorious, dictating, impoſing, ſelf-admirers. But he that is ſincere in religion, can ſearch and diſcover them: juſt as one that is a maſter of his art or ſcience, can detect a pretender, diſcover a bungler, and ſhew his cheats: there is alſo a nauſeouſneſs and fulſomneſs in the converſe with thoſe that are conceited, and full of themſelves; they being ſelf-flatterers, and great admirers of themſelves, and highly in love with the ſpurious iſſue of their own brain; and tho' their notions are imaginary and fantaſtical, and truly ridiculous to any one that is of any diſcerning ſpirit, yet they are importune and troubleſome: whereas he that ſpeaks truth in the evidence of reaſon, he commands every ear; for man's ſoul is a-kin to truth, and whatſoever truth doth appear, a man's ſoul doth greet it as its firſt and neareſt acquaintance. But if it be the preſumption of a conceited

brain, it cannot be received; and therefore thoſe perſons muſt be importune and troubleſome to faſten their notions upon unwilling receivers. Take it for granted, no wiſe man is fond of any notion, nor given up to any perſuaſion, ſo as not willingly to hear of any thing to the contrary. And really, it doth not become any of us to be fond of any notion that we have received, or to be under the power of any perſuaſion, ſo as not to be willing to ſubmit it to examination, and to offer it to ſevere and impartial ſearch; for we are all finite and fallible, and we ought to think we are ſhort and may be miſtaken; and if I receive that for truth, which is not ſo, I am deceived, and brought into a fool's paradiſe, and can lay no ſtreſs upon it; or if I do, it will fail me. But all truth is connatural, and of ſome uſe and advantage to the ſoul of man; but if it be a lie, and falſe, which I took for truth though I may be ſaved by the ſubſtantial truths that otherwiſe I received; yet ſo far forth as I am miſtaken ſo far forth ſhall I be fruſtrated, and never the better. Juſt as in the caſe of which the apoſtle ſpeaks, 1 *Cor.* iii. 12. They that build upon the foundation, *wood, hay, ſtubble*, &c. *may be ſaved*, becauſe upon the foundation; but their works ſhall ſuffer loſs. But why ſhould I not have my underſtanding be a receptacle for truth? Why ſhould I have any thing that is falſe there, when I ſhall never be the better for it? The moſt I can expect is, that God will excuſe me, becauſe I am honeſt-minded. But it becomes me, if I will do honour to God, and right to my own ſoul, impartially to examine whatſoever I receive as true in matters of religion;

religion; and to commit it to ſerious and impartial judgment: And I leave it with you, That no wiſe man, nor truly good man is fond of any opinion, or addicts himſelf to any perſuaſion, but hath this in the reſolution of his mind, that if any opinion be made known to him to be a miſtake, he will leave it; and this is inherent to all thoſe that are of ſober, modeſt, meek, and gentle ſpirits. But thoſe that are haughty and arrogant think too fondly of themſelves, and believe that every body ought to receive their dictates from them: they are indeed too full of themſelves, ever to be wiſe; they think they have attained, and ſo are beyond the apoſtle, who when he had profeſs'd his faith of the reſurrection, ſaith, *not that I have already attained, not that I am already perfect, not that I have already apprehended.*

I know there is a great allowance to be given to men's ſuppoſitions: that which a man hath long thought, and imagined, and hath been brought up in, and often put in his prayers, and often propoſed to others; it is a hard matter for him to call this into queſtion. But if we conſider that we may be miſtaken, being finite and fallible; it becomes us, at the leaſt, to be enquirers after truth, and to have an ear open after information, and to be reſolved to follow truth whenever it may appear. But on the other hand, there is no ſuch troubleſome converſe in the world, as the company of one that bolſters himſelf up with the opinion of his religion; but indeed knows not himſelf. To conclude, the right believer, is moſt modeſt and humble; leſs rigid, and cenſorious; leſs captious and given to take

exception; and ſo his converſe and ſociety is leſs offenſive and burdenſome. So far is true religion from doing any harm, or making any diſturbance in the common-wealth of mankind; for it is indeed the *ornament of a meek and quiet ſpirit, which in the ſight of God is of great price.* 1 Pet. iii. 4. And this for the application, where our apoſtle profeſſeth in a high degree his *faith* of the reſurrection, and his reſolution to ſubdue and ſubordinate all things thereunto; for he ſaith, *If by any means I may attain the reſurrection of the dead*, there he doth immediately ſubjoin the expreſſions of his *humility*; the deepeſt ſenſe he hath of his own ſhortneſs and fallibility; *Not as if I had already attained, or were already perfect:* not that I think I have already apprehended. How carefully doth he avoid all commendation of himſelf; how doth he decline pride and arrogancy, how far is he from ſelf-conceitedneſs and proud reflection upon himſelf, from all haughtineſs and ſelf-aſſuming? *Where is the moſt of God there is leaſt of ſelf.* This is the firſt. Where he doth profeſs his *faith*, there he teſtifies his *humility*. Now to the *caſe itſelf, not that I have already attained, or that I am already perfect, or that I have apprehended.* In the ſpiritual ſtate there is more or leſs of ſtrength, but not more or leſs of truth; for the truth of things conſiſts in an indiviſible point; either a man hath true grace, or he hath no grace at all; either he hath real goodneſs, or no goodneſs at all; either truly in the ſtate of grace or not at all in it; either he hath a true intention, or he doth not mean at all in religion:

on: The *profane* do not come near to religion, they do not pretend to it, but diſclaim it, and in practice renounce it; and the *hypocrite* he doth but pretend to it; for religion is only with the *honeſt-hearted*, with him that ſincerely means and intends. Therefore the gracious and merciful God whom we adore and worſhip, in whom we have our confidence, his goodneſs is ſo great, that he will indulge to us human infirmities, and bear with us in our miſtakes; but he is ſevere and impartial concerning our honeſt meaning and true intention: *He that doth not truly mean and intend, is nothing at all in religion.* So that though in the way of goodneſs, there may be more or leſs ſtrength, yet not more or leſs of truth: there is perfection of parts, not of degree; there is truth of intention tho' not fulneſs of performance, there is intention of all duty; there is a voidance of all known evil, and care of coming to the knowledge of the truth. Theſe things are neceſſary; for God doth give an abatement for ignorance in ſome things, where we have not had opportunity to know; for ſurpriſals now and then; for ſhortneſs and frailty; for caſes of temptations, and ſudden aſſaults, or indiſpoſitions of mind: but if here be a failure in theſe, it is expected, that at ſome diſtance of time there ſhould be a recovery; and thoſe failings are matter of great grief and offence, and a provocation to after-care and diligence; and therefore theſe conſiſt with the ſtate of grace and regeneration; and God gives an allowance and pardons us in theſe caſes; if in ſome particulars we are ignorant, when we are deſirous

ous to know, but have not had opportunity to enquire; or where there have been ſudden ſurprizals, violent aſſaults; for being out of frame and temper, at times: But in theſe caſes 'tis expected, that at ſome diſtance, we recover ourſelves, bluſh before God, and be aſhamed for our former diſtemper, and that it be matter of grief and diſpleaſure to us, and afterwards it prove an argument to us of greater care and watchfulneſs. Theſe things are conſiſtent with the regenerate ſtate. But it is unnatural to this ſtate, for any one to commit a known ſin deliberately, or willingly to omit a known duty: for we muſt be honeſt-hearted, and ſincerely intend to pleaſe God, and do that which is acceptable in his ſight: and this is that which St. *John* ſpeaks of, *He that is born of God doth not commit ſin; for the ſeed of God abideth in him.* 1 John. iii. 9. It is indiſpenſably neceſſary that we be ſincere, and honeſtly mean, and truly intend: but in this ſtate we are ſhort, and in ſome particulars fail; in ſome things we are ignorant, incogitant, and ſometimes are ſurpriſed; and for theſe things the apoſtle ſaith, *Not that I have already attained, not that I am already perfect; and I account not my ſelf to have apprehended.* But in reſpect of ſincerity, honeſt-heartedneſs, and good intention, there is no allowance, not the leaſt diſpenſation for a failure in thoſe particulars. And thus I have given you an account of the firſt thing, where the apoſtle expreſſeth his *faith* of the reſurrection, there he teſtifieth his *humility*.

DIS-

DISCOURSE XXIII.

The EXERCISE and PROGRESS of a CHRISTIAN.

PHILIPIANS iii. 12.

Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which alſo I am apprehended of Chriſt Jeſus.

I Come now to the *ſecond*, where he doth teſtify his *humility* there he doth engage himſelf to *care* and diligence. *But I follow after, if that by any means I may apprehend that for which I am apprehended of Chriſt Jeſus.* And indeed we have all encouragement from the divine revelation, as to faith, ſo to patient labour, and ſerious good endeavours: and this is our great concernment. The ſober modeſt believer he is not in haſte, but he *lives by faith*; and by this, he ſtays himſelf; as the prophet ſaith, *The juſt ſhall live by faith*, Hab. ii. 4. which is thus applied by the apoſtle reſolving in himſelf, That *he which ſhall come will come and will not tarry*; Heb. x. 37. and therefore he will *ſtay himſelf upon God*, and not be in haſte. And indeed, *wherever God is, there is both help and ſtrength*; ſo that he may act, and be up and doing. Wherefore, every good man

man applies himſelf to God, and attends upon his pleaſure, waiting for his influence in a careful and diligent uſe of all means, in the purſuit of his faith. And indeed, ſuch an one doth not tempt God, either by impatience, or diſtruſt, or by the neglect of his duty. For concerning the uſe of the means, he who looks up to God, puts himſelf in a way of ſubſerviency to his agency and providence; and he that doth not do ſo, his faith is but in colour, and meer pretence; he is not ſerious in religion; he does not mean, tho' for ſome end, he may profeſs: for we expect God to come in a way of bleſſing; and therefore we ſhould think it fit and neceſſary on our part, to be found in his way; to wit, in the uſe of means: and for any that acknowledge God, ſo far as to pray to him, and to beg his preſence, influence, and bleſſing and not to ſet himſelf in a way of obedience, and to anſwer his faith by ſubſerviency, and acting in the due uſe of ſuch means as God hath appointed; this is not religion, but a provocation of God. 'Tis a true ſaying, *God is not moved* by men that are aſleep; with them that are lazy and ſluggiſh; but by thoſe that are in motion: when men are upon action, God doth acknowledge them. We muſt *pray with humility and fervency*; *believe with expectation*; *and do with care and diligence.* This is the true chriſtian temper, and practice. He is not renewed, or enlivened with the noble and vigorous ſpirit of the goſpel, who doth not thus: but is in the dull ſpirit of the world; and as to ſpiritual things, he remains ſtill as a heavy clod of ſtupid earth, not ſown at all with the ſeed of God, as the apoſtle uſeth the phraſe,

1. *John* iii. 9. *The ſeed of God doth not remain in him.* For if it did, he would not ſit ſtill, nor conſent to act in the contrary nature. No one can imagine, that we are endued with power from above, or that we are made *partakers of the divine nature* by a communication of God to us, and his influence upon us, but it will ſhew itſelf in generous and noble acts towards him.

But to give you an account of this I will ſuggeſt three things.

1. That theſe are *principles of action.* For *faith* carries us on againſt deſpair, which doth diſcourage action: and then *humility*, that excludes preſumption, ſelf-opinion, and conceit that it hath already attained, and that nothing remains to be done.

2. It is the *cauſe of action.* For while we are in the ſtate of *faith* and hope, there is no full poſſeſſion; but we are in expectation. And then where there is *humility*, there is ſenſe of want; nothing there is found partial, nothing fond and conceited; but the truth of things takes place.

3. There is neceſſity of action. For we are to be ſubſervient to God. The work is to be done in us, and ſo cannot be without us, we being only paſſive. *Repentance* which is indiſpenſibly neceſſary to the recovery of a ſinner, *cannot be given to us unleſs we alſo repent.* For converſion is a mutual act, and ſo is faith. *We do believe to the obtaining of remiſſion of ſins, and we muſt work for eternal life with fear and trembling, becauſe God works in us to will and to do of his own good pleaſure.* Phil. ii. 12, 13. And the apoſtle conjoins theſe two as things are connatural:

tural: which muſt ſtand or fall together. *Work out your own ſalvation, for it is God that worketh in you.* And *awake thou that ſleepeſt, and ariſe from the dead, and Chriſt ſhall give thee life.* Eph. v. 14. They are put in conjunction, as things that are *connatural*; and the one does ſuppoſe the other. A man can neither be made holy here, or happy hereafter, by any thing that is wholly without himſelf, but he muſt have an internal temper, life and ſenſe, and feel and conceive, conſent and chuſe: for converſion and regeneration are vital acts, and do denote an internal act, life and motion. *Eph.* ii. 1. *You hath he quickened*, ſaith the apoſtle, *who were dead in treſpaſſes and ſins.* Thus much for explication, where he doth give teſtimony of his modeſty and *humility*, there he doth engage himſelf to *activity*, *care* and *diligence*. *But I follow after, but I preſs forward to the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus.*

Now from what I have ſaid, I *infer* two things.

1. Then, they are not in good earneſt to ſave their ſouls, who are careleſs and negligent about them. We give our minds to that, which we intend and mean; and where we do not mean, we are nothing at all, tho' there be a ſhew and ſeeming delight. They ſpeak prophanely, who ſay, they will truſt God with their ſouls, while they themſelves are careleſs and negligent about them. There is none doth ſo depend upon God for food and cloathing, or any of the neceſſaries of this life; but they themſelves will uſe their beſt brains, are thoughtful, are careful, and found in the uſe of ſuch means as are

proper

proper for that end. Now in religion, effects and operations are always proportional to the principle: ſlight and ineffectual powers and principles are neither in nature nor in grace; for we ſee *that power is altogether in vain, that never is in uſe, in act, nor employment.*

2. Let not ſhew and pretence, words and profeſſion ſignify religion; ſo ſhall the world be defended againſt ſcandal: let not theſe I ſay, teſtify religion, for they are not ſufficient, and by theſe means the world ſhall be preſerved from ſcandal. Men are not ſo vain, ſaving only in the caſe of religion, as to think one is *perſuaded*, if he *doth* nothing at all; I ſay, we are not ſo vain, ſaving only in religion, as to think, that any one is in good earneſt ſatisfied and reſolved, if he do no more than talk. Certainly the demonſtration and proof of faith is from its effects; and ſo hath St. *James* ſtated it; *ſhew me thy faith by thy works.* Jam. ii. 18. For religion is regular, is rational, is uniform, and all its parts are proportionable and homogenial; ſo that diſpoſition and profeſſion, principle and practice, they are conformable. If a man be real in religion, and the ſeveral parts of it, the operations are uniform, and proportionable; the diſpoſition of the mind, the profeſſion ſuch a man makes, the principles whereby he acts, and his practice, they are all of the ſame ſtamp. And thus I have given you an account in general concerning the truth of this, *that* where any man who is ſerious and an honeſt-hearted believer; where he doth declare his faith, entertain any divine revelation, there his faith is attended with

modeſty,

modeſty, and humility; he thinks *ſoberly of himſelf according to what he ought to think*: but he doth purſue his faith with vigour and activity; he does thoſe things that become a man to do, that profeſſes himſelf to be ſatisfied and fully perſuaded; his profeſſion and principle and practice, they are all right and uniform, all rational, and conſiſtent one with another, and there is no interfering. But I have been all this while in generals, and I remember in *philoſophy*, we have a good rule that ſaith, all *fallacy lies in univerſals*. There is no man prickt in his conſcience by telling him only that he is a ſinner at large, and in general. Therefore this being a practical point, you ſhall give me leave to inſtance in certain particulars, and they ſhall be but few: but main and principal, and ſuch which are of that importance, and indiſpenſible neceſſity, that I cannot abſolve any man from the leaſt of them, be he of any capacity or under any diſpenſation whatſoever. I ſay I cannot abate him any of them. Therefore theſe three things I charge upon every living ſoul in purſuit of his faith of the reſurrection; and if he fail in theſe, he is a pretender to the faith of the future ſtate, and not ſerious in his religion, or really conſcientious. The firſt of the three is this:

1. In the fear of God, carefully to *avoid all known evil*; for this I find to be a character that God himſelf gave of *Job* i. 1. *That he did fear God, and eſchew evil*: And if ſo be through temptation, or aſſault, or miſtake, or through human infirmity, or occaſional indiſpoſition, a man be diſturbed; yet then he doth after a time, when he is at leiſure, recover

cover himſelf, and renew himſelf by repentance. This is the firſt: it is neceſſary upon account of religion and conſcience, that every body that pretends to the faith of the goſpel, or makes profeſſion of it, that he do live exactly according to the difference of good and evil; that is, that which he doth know to be evil, he do carefully and conſcientiouſly avoid. But,

2. As he muſt avoid that which is evil; ſo out of love to God, and in compliance with his nature and will, he muſt *do all known good.* Out of fear of God, he muſt decline evil; and out of love to God, and deſire to fulfil his will, and to comply with him, and to pleaſe him, he muſt charge himſelf to do all known *good*, and to perform all known *duty*: and this is, in ſcripture-language, to *walk with God*: and to *live in all good conſcience.* But then,

3. To *ſubmit*, and refer *the ordinaries of life*, things that may lawfully be done in time and meaſure, *to ſerve* and advance *our future eſtate*, which is our great concernment. Theſe three, are the fundamentals of religion; and conſequently, are all of them indiſpenſably neceſſary; they are of univerſal concernment, and they take in all and every one; and ought to be obſerved in all times, and all places, and by all perſons: and a man that is not throughout in theſe three, that cannot acquit and approve himſelf to God in them, he is not qualified, not capable to move a queſtion about uncertain and diſputable matters: but he is as ridiculous as he was in the ſenſe of the great philoſopher, that being in a deep and deadly diſeaſe, came to the phyſician

phyſician to know how he might be cured of the *reduvia* or little looſe fleſh about his nail: ſo is every man that troubles himſelf with queſtions, and diſputes about matters of religion, that is not thorough-paced in theſe three: he deceives himſelf, and that which he ſaith is nauſeous, fulſome, and troubleſome to any ſober chriſtian. And I cannot account any man a right believer or true chriſtian, that is not found in the practice of theſe three things, *viz.* carefully to *avoid all known evil*; and to *perform all known good*: and a watchfulneſs over himſelf to *ſubordinate the lawful affairs of life*, things that may be done in meaſure and degree; to ſubordinate theſe to that which is main and principal, *viz.* The ſaving of the ſoul in eternity. For theſe three are the things that we underſtand when we ſpeak of religion, and conſcience in the ſubject, and without violation of the rules of charity, we may ſay, that he which fails in theſe, falls ſhort of the deſerved repute or eſteem of an honeſt and conſcientious believer. And thus I have brought generals to particulars, and ſhewn that it becomes every man that profeſſeth the faith of the goſpel, the faith of the reſurrection, to charge himſelf with all thoſe things that are purſuant in theſe. It becomes him to have a *modeſt* ſenſe of himſelf, but in the uſe of means to charge himſelf with great *diligence*, and to live in attendance upon God, and expectation of his influence, and aſſiſtance; and particularly he is to charge himſelf with theſe three things, moſt religiouſly and conſtantly: *to avoid all known evil*, and *perform all known duty*, and the doing of that good

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that his judgment and conſcience tells him he ought to do; and in the ordinaries of life, things that may lawfully be done in meaſure and degree, to *ſubordinate theſe to ſerve and advance the intereſt of his ſoul in eternity*, which is his main and great concernment; and this is unqueſtionable, indubitable, and indiſpenſible in religion; and if there be a failure in any of theſe, a man cannot approve himſelf, for a man of honeſty and integrity to God; a man of good conſcience; a man that is in a temper and in order to eternal life, nor in a true ſtate of religion. And ſo I have done with the *ſecond* propoſition, and come to the *third*.

III. Which was this, where he profeſſeth his *humility*, there he engageth himſelf to *induſtry* and *diligence*: and where he doth this, he doth acknowledge the *grace of God: that I may apprehend that for which I am aprehended*; which words import three things concerning the grace of God.

Firſt, They intimate the *priority* of God's grace; that his grace doth firſt lay hold of us, and prevent us.

Secondly, They intimate the *freeneſs* of God's grace; for he was apprehended before he did apprehend, therefore he had no antecedent merit, nothing on his part that did procure: and,

Thirdly, The *efficacy* of God's grace, that he was apprehended. And what ſhall I ſay more? if God be firſt in his grace, and do all voluntarily and freely without antecedent merit, or after recompence; and on purpoſe for our good; are we not then beholden to him, and may we not ſay with the apoſtle,

poſtle, By *grace I am what I am*, 1 Cor. xv. 10. and that I *live, yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in me?* Gal. ii. 20. I formerly ſpake ſomewhat to this; but now it comes more directly in my way. I ſhall endeavour to ſatisfy all men.

The grace and favour of God expreſſeth it ſelf in a way of benevolence and *compaſſion*, or in a way of love and *complacency*. That of benevolence and compaſſion prevents all our application to God and converſion to him; for *God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten ſon, that whoſoever believes in him, ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life*, John iii. 16. When we were in a ſtate of ſin and unregeneracy, God did bear us good-will, to wit he bare the affection of benevolence, he had compaſſion for us. But the love of *complacency* and delight, that is ſubſequent to our regeneration; *for it is repugnant, that God ſhould take pleaſure in us, till we do harmonize with him*, which is by our regeneration, and being made like him, and comformable to him. And the grace of God is taken, both for his *favour* and good inclination towards us, and alſo for his divine aſſiſtance; and the former is that which is the cauſe of the latter; for out of God's benevolence and compaſſion, he doth afford aid and aſſiſtance: upon that ſcore he doth awaken us, call upon us, and excite us; he doth both begin, go on, and conſummate. The very firſt beginning of a good mind is from the grace of God; we are not only prevented, but promoted by him, and every good work is perfected by the continuance of divine grace. We cannot acknowledge the grace of God too much, provided we do

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it right, and not neglect it. But this is the abuſe of the grace of God, to neglect it. For his grace and favour towards us, is for our encouragement; his aid and aſſiſtance is for our performance; and ſince he doth ſo declare his grace and goodneſs to us, we are obliged to obey and pleaſe him. And ſince he doth afford us his aid and aſſiſtance, we are enabled to turn to him: and all men that have any experience of themſelves, or acquaintance with God, are free and ingenuous, in the *acknowledgement*, that we are beholden to the grace of God both for the ſtrengthning of us, and carrying of us on, for the exciting of us and enabling of us, and proſpering of us in any good work, ſo that we may ſay, *our ſufficiency is of God*, 2 Cor. iii. 5. And as this is true in it ſelf, ſo it is the *ſenſe* of every one that is partaker of God's grace; and he that hath attained to the higheſt growth in religion, this man I dare ſay, will make the freeſt and fulleſt acknowledgement of the divine grace, and he will ſay ſincerely and heartily, that *through the grace of God, I am what I am*, 1 Cor. xv. 10. There are two queſtions which will eaſily be reſolved, *Who made thee to differ from another? Or what haſt thou that thou haſt not received?* 1 Cor. iv. 7. I ſay theſe two queſtions are readily and chearfully anſwered by every one that is the ſubject of the grace of God. If he do but conſult his own experience, he will ſay, that he has nothing but what he received from God, and is the fruit of his grace; and that it is the grace of God that makes him ſo differ from another. And as this is the ſenſe of every good man that is beholden to

the grace of God for what he is, ſo it is *becoming* and *comely*, to acknowledge grace, and to look upon it as the leaſt return that we can make. For on our part, there is neither antecedent merit, or after recompence; *we live by grace, and therefore it is comely for us, to acknowledge grace*, Pſal. lxvi. 16. The gracious and ingenuous ſoul doth not account any thing more reaſonable than to be grateful to its benefactor.

I will conclude now with this, that upon this ſcore of magnifying and advancing the grace of God, two things are not to be done, which ſome that are unwary do interpret as derogatory to the grace of God, and ſo I hope ſhall prevent all miſtakes. To wit,

1. They are not to be blamed or looked upon as neglecters of God's grace, or undervaluers of it, or to abate it in the leaſt, who vigorouſly and with all imaginable zeal, call upon men to *uſe*, employ, and improve the principles of God's creation: that charge it upon men, as a point of religion and conſcience, to uſe, employ and improve the principles of God's creation. I find that ſome men take offence, to hear *reaſon* ſpoken of out of a pulpit, or to hear thoſe great words of *natural light*, of *principles of reaſon, and conſcience*. They are doubtleſs in a mighty miſtake, for theſe two things are very conſiſtent, as I ſhall ſhew you by and by, and there is no inconſiſtency between the *grace of God*, and the calling upon men carefully to uſe, improve and employ the *principles of God's creation*, and the telling men they ſhall meet with no diſcouragement from God,

God, foraſmuch as he will not leave them, till they firſt leave him. And indeed this is a very profitable work to call upon men to anſwer the principles of their creation, to fulfil natural light, to anſwer natural conſcience, to be throughout rational in what they do; for theſe things have a divine foundation. *The ſpirit in man is the candle of the Lord lighted by God, and lighting men to God.* It is from God by way of efficiency, and to God finally. And then

2. For the other, thoſe two great places of ſcripture will anſwer all that I ſay, to wit, that we may ſpeak clearly and fully to any one that is in a way of religion or in dependance upon God, or in the uſe of means, that there is no *diſcouragement* lies upon him, from any thought or purpoſe of evil in God againſt him, or that God will be wanting to him, unleſs he firſt fall off from God, and leave him. *In every nation, he that feareth God and worketh righteouſneſs, is accepted of him*, Acts. x. 15. And therefore to ſpeak of natural light, of the uſe of reaſon in religion, is to do no diſſervice atall to grace; for God is acknowledged in both: in the former, as laying the ground-work of his creation: in the latter, as reviving and reſtoring it. So that theſe do agree together, as God doth agree to himſelf; God laying the religion of conſcience, and making man in ſuch a power of judging; and God reſtoring him to the ſelf ſame ſtate again, after he had conſented to iniquity, whereby he had marred his principles, and diſabled himſelf; ſo that I ſay, theſe two do as well agree together, as God doth agree

with himſelf; for God is the *author* of nature, and the *reſtorer* of it. By the way I will obſerve how little there is in many controverſies; if wiſe and temperate men had the managing of them; but when once there is ſuſpicion and jealouſy, theſe make and increaſe differences. This is in ſhort all that I will ſay, it is not poſſible for any one that is a right believer not to depend on the grace of God; it is highly ingenuous for him to make all poſſible acknowledgements, it becomes him to think that he owes all his hopes to the goodneſs of God, and that he ſtood in need of a divine ſtrength for every new motion; yea to attribute every thing that is good to the grace of God.

But notwithſtanding this, *firſt* we are to call upon one another, every body is to engage himſelf to excite all the powers of nature, to act according to reaſon and to anſwer all principles of natural light and conſcience; and this we are to do in compliance with grace.

And *Secondly*, We will by no means upon any pretence diſcourage any one that is in a diſpoſition God-ward; for we are by ſcripture warranted to tell men, that God doth not forſake men, till he be firſt forſaken of men, and that God will not refuſe any one that comes unto him; but is a real friend to ſouls, and doth delight in the converſion of ſinners, and doth his part toward the attaining of it; and this I have added to take off offence and ſcandal, that ſo no one may be miſtaken. *Men are not ſo far to preſs the principles of God's creation, as to neglect the grace of God: nor ſo far to depend on the grace*

grace of God as to neglect the principles of God's creation. I put them in conjunction, and they agree as well together, as God doth with himſelf.

DISCOURSE XXIV.

The PRACTICE of thoſe who are improved.

PHILIPPIANS iii. 15.

Let as many of us therefore as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwiſe minded, God ſhall reveal even this unto you.

LET *therefore as many of us as be perfect, be thus minded.* But had he not denied perfection before, *ver.* 12. *not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect*: who doth he now ſpeak of? Let as many as be perfect be thus minded, take an account of this in ſix or ſeven particulars.

1. It is a ſuppoſition of *charity*; what he had before denied of himſelf he doth admit in reſpect of others. And indeed we feel our own infirmities, and know our own weakneſſes, ſhortneſs and imperfection; but we obſerve other men's graces. The beſt of men know more by themſelves, than by others. He finds how oft he is out of frame and temper, how oft he is indiſpoſed: but other perſons are known only by their excellencies, by their

virtues; and we believe better of them, then we know by ourſelves. This is that which the apoſtle ſaith, *charity hopeth all things, believeth all things.* Modeſty becomes us in reſpect of ourſelves: but charity bids us entertain a good opinion of others. You ſee he gives to others the greateſt advantage, and full allowance; but he takes no more to himſelf than is certainly due. Thus doth he practiſe according to his own rule, *Rom.* xii. 10. *Be ye kindly affectioned with brotherly love, preferring one another.* That is the *firſt* thing.

2. It is a word of *encouragement*: becauſe we are wont to ſay to new beginners and learners, *well done*; when it is only well begun. Thus God himſelf, in his goodneſs, and kindneſs towards us, for our encouragement doth own *Job* as a *perfect and upright* man, *Job* i. 8. and he ſaith it again, when he was traduced; and *Satan* belied him: and yet ſee what *Job* ſaith of himſelf, *Job* ix. 20. *If I juſtify myſelf, my own mouth ſhall condemn me.* That is, the *ſecond.*

3. It is the force of his *argument*, and then it amounts to this; as you would prove yourſelves good proficients, as you would make it appear that you are thoſe that do grow and increaſe in goodneſs, do ſo and ſo. And then the notion that it affords us, is this; that the deſign and intention of perfection ſo far as it is attainable to human endeavour, is belonging to the ſtate of goodneſs. The regenerate eſtate doth not aſſign to its ſelf *manner* or *matter*, or ſuch a growth; but tends to perfection; ſo far as the principle of it doth require. And even

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thoſe that die in peace, if they had lived longer in this ſtate of probation and trial; undoubtedly they had made further improvement of that ſtock of grace that God had beſtowed upon them. And upon this account, long life is a mercy; becauſe of greater growth, fuller improvement, and more ſervice. And that is the third account.

4. It is ſaid *reſpectively*, and in a contradiſtinction. So we find him expreſſing himſelf: perfect in contradiſtinction to children and weaklings, ſuch as are weak and imperfect. 1 *Cor.* iv. 10. there are *weak and ſtrong*; and 1 *Cor.* iii. 1. there are thoſe ſpoken of that are *ſpiritual*, and thoſe that are *carnal*. *Perfect* are thoſe that are ſpiritual, that have their ſenſes ſpiritually exerciſed. And the *weak*, they are called fleſhly or carnal: and he gives an inſtance of thoſe that are carnal; they are theſe that are iniclinable to diviſion, and to ſay *I am of Paul, and I am of Apollo, &c.* when thoſe that are *ſpiritual* are above all theſe things, and make no head or diviſion; but look upon all as God's inſtruments, and as thoſe that indifferently belong to God; and to join a man's ſelf to any one of theſe as a head, is a piece of carnality, and not of ſpirituality. And it is a notion worth our obſervation; that it is not all perfection that is boiſterous, and that makes a noiſe in the church of God; as here *they* did, one crying, *I am of Paul; and another of Apollo: I am of Cephas, &c. are ye not carnal? &c.* Theſe are *weak* perſons, and ſuch who, the apoſtle ſaith, are not to be admitted to queſtions and doubtful diſputations. Theſe are to be fed with milk, and not with ſtrong meat; they

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are not to be admitted to curious enquiries. And this is the fourth thing.

5. Perfection *of the way*, or means; and this belongs to all men. We are *perfecting*, 2 Cor. xiii. 11. as the word is, which is the ſame word which we have, *Matt.* iv. 21. where it is ſaid that the *ſons of Zebedee* were *mending their nets* they were making up holes, and breaches that were found in their nets. And *this is our perfection*; *to be mending our ſelves*, and bringing our ſelves out of diſtemper; to be repairing ourſelves, by renewal and mortification, by aſſiſting and helping one another. This is the perfection *of the way*, and this it is to be in the uſe of *means*.

6. The perfection of our *rule*, and principles or ground, or end: ſo we are perfect. For here we are as the apoſtle, ſtriving, if that by any means *we may attain unto* perfection. *This* every man ſhould have in his eye, at this he ſhould aim, this ſhould be his end and deſign, to *preſs towards the mark of the high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus*. And this is perfection, becauſe we have the right end in our eye.

7. There is perfection of the *diſpoſition* and intention of mind, *viz. ſincere and honeſt meaning*; and *this* every body muſt have, or he is *no body in religion*; and ſincerity of heart, uprightneſs of ſoul, and true intention of mind, this is the beſt of us, in this ſtate. In *this* doth religion greatly conſiſt, that men do heartily and ſincerely intend, mind, and mean God, goodneſs, righteouſneſs and truth, and are able to make it out, that their religion is not ſubſervient to worldly ends and purpoſes: for this

this is foul and ſhameful, a great ſacrilege and profanation of God, and holy things; to name God, and to mean the world; to pretend conſcience, and to have our deſigns; to engage our ſelves in a way of religion to gain credit, for worldly purpoſes. No, God and religion are things too holy, and ſacred, to ſerve any other ends or purpoſes than the honour of God, and the ſanctifying of our ſouls here, and ſaving them hereafter: and whoſoever names theſe, upon any other purpoſe, he is a ſacrilegious perſon, and a prophaner of things that are holy. And this is the account that I now give you; that though he had denied perfection before, yet here he doth admit it.

Now for the words read unto you, I gather up the ſubſtance of them in theſe four propoſitions.

1. There is *that* in religion, which is *neceſſary* and determined, fixt and immutable, clear and perſpicuous; about which they who are of growth, and proficiency in religion, do not differ. *As many as are perfect, are thus minded.*

2. There is alſo *that* in religion which is not ſo clear, plain, and evident; about which it may happen that they may be otherwiſe minded; that is, otherwiſe one than another; or otherwiſe than they ſhould be; or otherwiſe than the truth is. If any *be otherwiſe minded, i. e.* in other matters, they may be otherwiſe one than another; otherwiſe than the truth; otherwiſe than they ought to be. That is the ſecond.

3. There is reaſon to think, that God will bring out of particular miſtakes, him that is right in the main. *God ſhall reveal even this unto you.* For I do not look upon this as ſpoken with the ſpirit of

prophecy;

propheſy; but ſpoken according to chriſtian reaſon. God ſhall reveal in his time, *i. e.* there is reaſon to think that God will bring out of particular error and miſtake, him that is right in the main.

4. They which agree in the main, but differ in ſome particulars, ought neceſſarily to *hold together* as if they were in all things agreed. They ought to *walk by the ſame rule: and to mind the ſame things.* They who agree in the main, though they differ in ſome particulars, ought to own one another, and to hold together; and encourage one another to growth, progreſs, and proficiency; they are to unite themſelves in heart, and good-will, in love and affection, as if there were no difference between them, but in all things agreed. For the *main and principal* things in religion, wherein the honour of God is concluded, *this* is ſuch a ground and foundation of union, that matters of particular apprehenſion, ought not to make difference or ſeparation.

You ſee what uſeful matter lies before us; and all theſe four obſervations do lie plainly in the words. And if theſe things were well digeſted and conſidered, there would be a ſolid foundation laid for peace and unity in the church of God; and men would agree in hearty love and good-will, and be mutually helpful one unto another; and no ſuch thing as hatred or diſpleaſure found among them, one againſt another. And he that runs may read theſe things in the words; which being of ſo great uſe and import for the edification of the church of Chriſt, I ſhall ſpeak to them ſeverally: only the two firſt ſhall run together.

I, and

I, and II. The things that are *main* and *principal* in religion, in thoſe things all that are of growth and proficiency in religion, *do mind the ſame things:* and wherein they may be otherwiſe minded, *i. e.* either otherwiſe one than another, or than the truth is, or otherwiſe than they ought, and ſhould be; theſe are things of leſs moment, weight, and concernment.

Now that I might ſhew you the great things of religion wherein there is an univerſal harmony, conſent and agreement; it is not neceſſary for me to remove from the text: I mean from thoſe things that have been ſpoken to you out of this chapter. The things that the apoſtle had inſiſted upon, are theſe.

(1.) He had declared Chriſt for juſtification, from thoſe words, *that I may be found in him:* for this is the chriſtian foundation, that ſinners are accepted in and through the beloved. This is the chriſtian ſpirit, to hold the head, to go to God in and through Chriſt; to depend upon his mediation, recommendation, interceſſion; and not to look for acceptance for our own worthineſs; to have no confidence in our ſelves, or in our own righteouſneſs, but in that righteouſneſs which God hath declared and eſtabliſhed; even that *righteouſneſs which is of God by faith*, as the apoſtle expreſſeth himſelf, when he diſclaims his own *righteouſneſs, that was of the law*, and flies for juſtification to that righteouſneſs which God had declared; even goſpel righteouſneſs, or the righteouſneſs which is of God by faith.

(2.) And

(2.) And then *another* thing declared by the apoſtle in this chapter, is *Chriſt Jeſus* to the effects and purpoſes of mortification, regeneration, and divine and ſpiritual life. *That I might know him, and the power of his reſurrection, and the fellowſhip of his ſufferings; being made conformable to his death.* From which words I have declared unto you, that the death and reſurrection of Chriſt muſt all be verified and made true in us, as in Chriſt. We muſt be *planted into the likeneſs of his death*, which is done by our dying to the world, and ſelfiſhneſs; and by mortifying the fleſh with the affections and luſts. And we muſt have in us, the *power of his reſurrection*; which is expreſſed by our nativity from above, by ſpirituality, heaven-mindedneſs; by ſubordinating all things in life, to the hopes of the future ſtate: *If by any means we may attain to the reſurrection of the dead.* Theſe are great and important forms of words, and do contain in them, the great things of religion. And though I might refer you to thoſe; yet, in ſo weighty a matter as *this*, that I may be exact, and ſpeak diſtinctly; I will put things into their forms and modes, that you may the better underſtand them.

The great *materials of natural light*, are firſt in reaſon, and then reinforced in ſcripture. The articles of faith are firſt in ſcripture, and being there revealed, are after juſtified in reaſon: there is no true reaſon againſt them, but there is full ſatisfaction in them.

1. The great things in religion are thoſe in the firſt place that concern God: and thoſe things which

which concern God, I refer to two heads. (For, all things that relate to God are not equally neceſſary for us to determine; but ſome things are neceſſary for our happineſs; and to found in us religion and conſcience, to determine and reſolve concerning God.) *viz.*

Firſt, The neceſſary *perfections of the divine nature*; whereon all religion in us doth depend.

And now I will ſingle out *two*: for divers of the divine perfections are incomprehenſible, as his omnipotency, eternity, ubiquity, and divers other attributes which we admire and adore, but we cannot comprehend. But ſome of his perfections are ſuch, that the knowledge of them is *fundamental* to religion and conſcience in us. And,

I will inſtance in *two*, which are neceſſary for every one to reſolve himſelf in, or elſe his religion will not be grounded; and they are theſe. The *holineſs* of God, or his righteouſneſs: and the *truth* of God and his faithfulneſs. I name but two, becauſe by holineſs and righteouſneſs I mean the ſame; as alſo, by his truth and faithfulneſs I underſtand one and the ſame thing. 'Tis fundamental in religion to know *theſe*, and acknowledge them, and to be reſolved in a man's mind about them: for otherwiſe we ſhall have no right conceptions of God nor make due applications to him; nor will our hope and confidence in God, be ſufficiently encouraged, or grounded. As for any *other attribute* of God we are not ſo much concerned to underſtand and determine: but religion is without ground and foundation, if a man doth not know God to be *holy* and *righteous*,

righteous, and cloath him with *truth and faithfulneſs*: if we do not give God the honour of his truth, and veracity, who will believe him? If any one doubt whether God be holy and righteous, he hath not an example for his imitation; for we muſt imitate God in his holineſs and righteouſneſs; in his truth and faithfulneſs. And therefore theſe perfections are neceſſary for us to know, and underſtand: otherwiſe religion in us, hath not an original. For *it is religion to imitate God in theſe*; in holineſs, in righteouſneſs, in truth, and faithfulneſs. This is the firſt thing concerning God, that we are concerned throughly to underſtand, and to be well ſatisfied about; or elſe we have no copy for our imitation, nor no encouragement to build our faith upon him, or to depend upon what he hath declared. But, as for the *other* attributes and perfections of God, as his eternity, his immenſity, his omnipreſence, and the like; none can graſp them, or comprehend them, or declare about them; but here we are glad rather to admire and adore. But as for his *holineſs and righteouſneſs*, &c. what theſe are we do know, and are concerned to know; and there is nothing in theſe that doth confound human apprehenſions, and theſe are fundamental to our religion. But then

Secondly, Concerning God, it is neceſſary that they to whom divine *revelations* are made, do entertain them, acknowledge, and ſubmit to them. As for them to whom they are not revealed, there can be no more than negative infidelity; which is not the foundation of any man's condemnation: but to them to whom they are revealed, it is neceſſary

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to them, in point of conſcience, and upon account of their future happineſs, that they to whom God doth declare himſelf, that they do entertain his revelations, acknowledge, and ſubmit to them. And here comes in the *chriſtian faith*; the ſum of which is this, that we owe our ſalvation to the grace and goodneſs of God, declared by *Jeſus Chriſt*. And this is the ſum of the chriſtian faith, and this is that which every body is concerned to know, and underſtand, retain and believe: and theſe things are *neceſſary and fundamental*, and in which all good men do harmonize and agree, as neceſſary to be believed concerning God.

2. There are things which are according to *human nature*, which may be diſtinguiſhed theſe *three* ways.

1. The things that are founded in our ſtate, and *relation to God*, do import,

Firſt, Our *reverence* of the deity.

Secondly, Faith and *affiance* in God.

Thirdly, *Obedience* to him, and conformity to his will. And theſe are founded in our *relation to God*, and that capacity which we ſtand in to him: for we are made *intelligent and voluntary*; and have notions of God and apprehenſions of him; and internal ſentiments. And this ſpeaks our capacity, above the creation below us; and by theſe are we able to take cognizance of God, and to make acknowledgments to him and to perform duty towards him and to make returns unto him. Theſe things are founded in our capacities, and in the relation that we ſtand in to God, as his creatures. For this is fundamental in reaſon, that if I be in the ſtate

ſtate of a creature, according to my ability, and capacity, I am bound to do homage to my maker, as my ſuperior, and to acknowledge him as my original; and therefore ought to obſerve, and obey him, to fulfil his will, and make returns unto him; and theſe are unavoidable to intellectual nature, and inſeparable from it. And if we fail in theſe, we are in a ſtate of deformity, and contradiction to God, and to our own natures. But then,

2. Things that are grounded in our *conſtitution of parts*. We are compounded of body, and ſpirit, and ſuch things are *theſe three*, that are ſecured upon this account, as *modeſty*, *ſobriety*, and the *government of reaſon*, above ſenſe. And theſe are neceſſary as being founded in our make and conſtitution: and in reſpect of our compoſition it becomes us, to be *modeſt*, becauſe of our lower and inferior part; and to be *ſober*; and it is fit that reaſon ſhould have predominance over ſenſe; that reaſon ſhould rule and govern the bodily part, becauſe that reaſon is ſuperior appointed of God, and theſe are founded in our very make and conſtitution. And then,

3. There are things belonging to that *reſpect we ſtand* in toward *each other*, as fellow creatures, and that is *juſt*, *and equal dealings*; and not to do one another harm. No man living in the world, can leave any one of theſe things out of his religion: they are main things; and all men that are of any conſcience or ſobriety, do agree in all theſe things; and he cannot be an honeſt man, and of any growth and improvement in religion, that makes any doubt of them.

Theſe

These are all of them indiſpenſibly *neceſſary*, upon the account of religion, and every good man is true to them. He is well informed concerning the holineſs of God, and his faithfulneſs: he doth entertain the articles of faith that are clear and plain, in the revelation of God; the ſum of which is this, that he owes his hopes of ſalvation to the grace of God declared by Jeſus Chriſt: he knows that he ought to anſwer the *relation* he ſtands in to God, and that he ought to act according to his capacity: and to have reverent thoughts of God, and to have faith, affiance and truſt in him; to obey God, and to fulfil his will, and do his pleaſure. And in reſpect of *himſelf*, ſince he is ſpirit, as well as fleſh; he ought to maintain a government of reaſon over ſenſe; and he ought to be *ſober*, and not make his rational faculties drudges like the *Gibbeonites*, to hew wood and to draw water: but to govern his affections and paſſions by his more noble part. And becauſe he is *one in the family of God*, he ought with all his fellow creatures to live according to rules of *juſtice* and equity; and not to beat his fellow ſervants, but to do no body any harm. And theſe things are as evident as the ſun that ſhines; and in theſe, I cannot diſpenſe with any one, nor make any allowance. If any one fail in theſe he fails in that which is neceſſary and vital, to make him a good man. And this is *general and univerſal*, in reſpect of the ſtate of all perſons: in all ages, and times whatſoever. In this muſt he declare his religion, that he hath a true deſire, and endeavour to know what is right and good; and having found it out, to comply with it in heart

and life. And I do not know how any man can ſatisfy himſelf as touching his duty to God, if he do not thus much: nor make it appear that he hath any care of his own ſalvation, and future ſafety, unleſs he doth ſincerely ſet himſelf to know what is pleaſing to God, and what will give him an offence: and then to be careful to avoid what will offend him, and do what is acceptable unto him. For to know in ſome meaſure, the difference between good and evil, right and wrong, *this* is every body's *wiſdom* and underſtanding; and then to do according to this known difference, *this* is a man's *goodneſs*. If he do not the former, he is not at all improved in his intellectuals: if he do not the latter, he is not at all reformed in his morals. And if neither improved in his intellectuals, nor reformed in his morals; what hath he to ſhew upon account of religion and conſcience? What hath he to ſhew that he may call religion?

The rule of natural knowledge is *ſenſus animæ*: the rule of revealed truth is ſacred ſcripture. Concerning the materials of *natural knowledge*, he hath abuſed his nature, who finds not ſeeds of theſe ſown in it. Concerning *revealed truth*, he that is not ſatisfied in the authority of ſcripture revealing to us matters of faith, is not yet perſwaded to become a chriſtian. To make one religious in general, the principles of God's creation may ſuffice; to make one a chriſtian, the receiving matters of faith, is neceſſary: to diſcerning of things of *natural knowledge*, the true ſevere impartial uſe of reaſon is needful: to the knowing the things of *revealed truth*, the fair

and

and ingenuous conſtruction of words and phraſes in ſcripture, is needful. Not but that the materials of natural knowledge, inſtances of virtue, meaſures of good and evil, are *repeated*, acknowledged, and reinforced in ſcripture.

This ſeems *general* in reſpect to all times and places; a true deſire and endeavour to know what is right and good; and being found out to comply with it in heart and life. I know not any thing elſe whereby any may approve himſelf to God, as doing his duty to him; or teſtify the care of his own ſoul, as doing what is worthy of it and tending to its everlaſting ſafety.

But thus much for *explication*, and 'tis of great *uſe* many ways.

1. That men may *charge* themſelves not to fail in the neceſſaries of religion.

2. That men knowing what are the neceſſary things that religion requires; and what are thoſe things wherein good men may chance to be otherwiſe minded, one than another; yet they may *live in love*, and hearty good will, and no way provoke one another. And *this* is of mighty uſe, in the life of man. And I have taken the more pains in it, that I may ſatisfy any perſon concerning thoſe things, which are of abſolute and indiſpenſible neceſſity in religion. For if a man be peremptory and confident of a notion, and the ground of it is but a ſuppoſition; when ſtreſs comes to be laid upon it; it is like a building without a foundation, and when ſtorms and tempeſts ariſe, it will be overturned, and fall to the ground. For a man is ſure

of nothing in religion unleſs he can ſatisfy his mind from unqueſtionable grounds, and foundations. And therefore I have ſhewn you how the *neceſſaries* of religion are founded; and how they do ariſe. And they that are of any growth and proficiency in religion, they do not differ in theſe: for they are either clear in reaſon, or revelation, or both; and a ſurer foundation there is not in the world. And ſuch are thoſe things that I have named, ſuch as are immutably and unchangeably good; ſuch as theſe have neceſſary place in the doctrine of the goſpel; as alſo in the grounds and principles of reaſon. And all elſe belong to theſe immutable and eternal rights; theſe unchangeable principles of good and theſe have great place in the doctrine of the goſpel. For is it not ſaid expreſly, that *God* ſent his ſon into the world, to *turn us from our iniquities*; *and the grace of God that bringeth ſalvation teacheth us to live piouſly* in reſpect of God: and *ſoberly* in the government of our affections: and *right eouſly*, and equally one with another. This is moſt certain, that all the notions of natural knowledge and inſtances of moral virtues, are repeated and reinforced in ſcripture. Scripture ratifies them all; juſt as it is ſaid, in the *regeneration* we are *created over again* in Chriſt Jeſus, to thoſe good works whereunto we were *appointed*. So that the recovery of Chriſt is a reſtoration, and further confirmation of all the principles of God's creation; of all that reſult in reſpect of natural light, of all principles and obſervance of God, of good government over ourſelves, and righteous dealings one with another. So that here though

though you may diſtinguiſh *reaſon*, and *ſcripture*, *yet there is nothing in reaſon, but it hath an acknowledgement in ſcripture:* and it is reinforced, and hath a further eſtabliſhment by it. And the great things of God's creation, are thoſe which the recovery we have by Chriſt prepares us unto, and ends in. And that which the ſcripture doth *over and above* reveal, is this; it gives a man aſſurance, that God is placable and reconcileable; and alſo declares to us, *in what way*, and upon what *terms*, we may be confident, that God will pardon ſin, and receive a ſinner to mercy, *viz.* upon his repentance and faith, and returning to his duty. And thanks be to God that he hath given us this aſſurance. And to me it is matter of the *eaſieſt belief*, of any thing in the world, and that for two reaſons.

1. Becauſe the matter is *worthy of God.* For it is a matter of eaſy belief to think, that the *firſt* and chiefeſt goodneſs will pardon a creature, that was never better than finite and fallible; upon the ſenſe of his error, acknowledgement of his offence, and return to duty. I ſay, this is matter of the eaſieſt belief, that the *firſt* and chiefeſt goodneſs will pardon ſuch an one, one way or other. And then comes in the *goſpel*, that declares, that God doth this, and will do it, in and through *Chriſt.* And the *way* he directs us to, is the way of *repentance* and *faith*, and this repentance and faith is made poſſible to us, through the grace and aſſiſtance of God. And then they are terms highly deſirable and grateful to us. For a man can have no ſatisfaction if he hath done amiſs, till he doth repent, and as much as in him

lies, undo what he hath done. If a man hath any ingenuity, if he hath done wrong, he will ask forgiveneſs, and make ſatisfaction. And ſo it is in the caſe of repentance, if a man be once of a good diſpoſition God-ward; it is a harder matter for ſuch an one to obtain forgiveneſs of himſelf, than of God. Now, when God hath told us, that he will pardon ſin, if we ask him forgiveneſs in the name of *Chriſt*, and be heartily ſorrowful for what we have done amiſs and return to our duty: he doth declare *that* which a man would have deſired, and upon *ſuch terms*, as it is fitting to be done. For this is *ſanatory* to us, and ſatisfactory to our reaſon and underſtanding; and for the reſtoration of our natures. For if a man hath done a thing which is amiſs, and endeavoured to make ſatisfaction; though he meets with a perſon that is perverſe and implacable, yet he eaſeth his mind, becauſe he hath done the beſt in the caſe. So that, theſe terms are comfortable, becauſe we are aſſured of them, by divine revelation: not difficult in themſelves to believe in the uſe of a man's reaſon, conſidering that God is the *firſt and chiefeſt good*; goodneſs is his prime perfection: and the relation that we ſtand in to God, conſidering that we were not made in the height of angelical perfection but liable to temptation from our bodies, and to miſrepreſentations from our ſenſes. And in this nothing elſe is propoſed, but that which a man, in the uſe of his reaſon would think fit, and would do if he be of any good diſpoſition, whether he were enjoined it or not. He would revoke an error, renounce what he hath done amiſs, deprecate the offence

fence of his ſuperior, and return to his duty. This is *ſatisfactory* to the reaſon of a man's mind; and reſtorative to us, to our natural principles. Then,

2. Theſe I ſay are certain, fixt, immutable and unchangeable becauſe clear either in reaſon, or revelation, or both. And then becauſe they are ſuitable and *connatural* to the regenerate ſtate; and we cannot fail in theſe, unleſs we deſert our own natures. For if we be in the regenerate ſtate, there is the *ſeed of God* in us, and good nature towards God, and all in a reconciliation with God. And for theſe two reaſons, they that are ſincere, or any ways conſiderable in religion in theſe things, they are alike minded.

But in things of an *inferior nature*, they may perchance think otherwiſe one than another, and otherwiſe than the truth is, and as they ought to think. But in *theſe* great things, *as many as be perfect are thus minded.* And they that be ſo, though in other matters they may not think alike, yet *God ſhall reveal this unto them.* Now I will ſhew you, how it comes to paſs, that they, which do agree in the main, may in other matters think otherwiſe one than another, or than the truth is.

1. From the creature's *fallibility* and liableneſs to be miſtaken. And ſo I underſtand that ſcripture, *Rom.* iii. 4. *Let God be true, and every man a liar.* Not that every man is a liar, or tells that which is falſe, for ſuch are incapable of the kingdom of heaven; but thus; God is immutable and infallible, man is not ſo, but liable to error and miſtakes: not that he actually lies, but may be miſtaken. And our fallibility and liableneſs to miſtake is grounded in three things: 1. Partly

1. Partly the *ſhortneſs* of our *principles*.

2. Partly alſo the *diſtance* of *objects*. And

3. Partly from the *miſrepreſentation* of them to our *ſenſes*.

Firſt, The *ſhortneſs* of our *principles*. We are but of finite perfections. Then the *diſtance* of *objects* from our faculties; and therefore from an undue diſtance, we differ in many things. And then *miſrepreſentation* to our *ſenſes*. We do by our reaſon rectify the errors of *ſenſe*, and know things by our rational faculties otherwiſe than they appear to our ſenſes. But, this is the truth of the caſe; neither by virtue of God's creation at firſt, nor the grace of regeneration by Chriſt, can we ſecure an abſolute certainty and exemption from all error and miſtake. And the reformed church doth not pretend to any ſuch perfection, and infallibility. What we ſhall *be* when we come into the heavenly kingdom, we do not know now; but this we may determine, that the nearer we approach to God, the more exempt we ſhall be from error or miſtake: and we do approach nearer and nearer unto God, by *imitation of him*, * and participation of his nature, and by becoming like to him in holineſs, purity and righteouſneſs. That is the firſt thing, our *fallibility*.

2. Accidental *prejudice* againſt ſome truth. There is a prejudice lies upon ſeveral of us againſt ſeveral truths, upon ſeveral accounts.

1. By virtue of *education*, that which is wrought in us by education, is like a colour in grain, or laid in.

* Similitudine appropinquamus deo, diſtamus diſſimilitudine.

in oil, that will not wear out or change. Any truth hath great diſadvantage, if the ſubject hath been long poſſeſt of the contrary to it. It is a harder matter to throw out than at firſt not to admit. This is certain, that which is fair enough to ſatisfy ingenuity, will not be ſufficient to take any man off from an opinion. And that is the firſt thing, *prejudice* by virtue of *education.*

2. Prejudice from *converſe*, and compliance with thoſe that we keep company with. For it is mightily taking with men, and they are very prone to comply with thoſe they take pleaſure in. It is obſerved that *a man's companion finds him ſuch as he is, or makes him ſuch:* therefore we ſay, if you know not what a man is in himſelf, you know him by the company that he keeps, and by thoſe whoſe company he takes delight in. For converſe is of a moulding and transforming nature: and it will be as it were two *bodies in one ſoul* eſpecially where perſons are cloathed with an high credit, reputation, and eſteem of religion. And it is a mighty temptation to any one to refer himſelf, and run blindfold into the judgment and practice of that man, whom he hath a high reverence and eſteem of as to religion.

A *Third* accidental prejudice againſt truth is this: *a common ſuppoſition*, common ſenſe. We take it for an *apology* for many worthy men in the former ages of the church; who yet lived, and for ought we know died in ſome error; that they *did err, by the error of the times:* they had common errors, but no proper and particular error. If a man do not take heed to himſelf, he will worſhip one idol or another;

er; either the idol of general imagination, or elſe he will do as fools and conceited perſons, worſhip the idol of their own particular fancy. Then the temptation to modeſty, and the advantage that we give to community and common-ſenſe, will oft put a good man to it; and make him aſk himſelf this queſtion and thus to reaſon with himſelf; *How come I to depart from the community of others? Why do I imagine that the holy ſpirit did leave the community and join it ſelf to me?* So that, he will have a diſadvantage from his own good diſpoſition. And then we ſee that the reaſon of many men agreeing together is one of the beſt things in the world. And *vox populi*, is *vox Dei*.

A *fourth* accidental prejudice is this; a great *conceit and ſuppoſition* that it is ſo: this poſſeſſing the minds of men that *it muſt needs be ſo*, makes them confident, and neglective of ſearch, and enquiry. And, when reaſon cannot over-rule imagination, no good is to be done. For many men are ſo tranſported with imagination, that no man's reaſon can have admiſſion. And under this, ſome men have lain all their days, and by reaſon thereof were never in a diſpoſition of enquiry.

A *fifth*, There is a mighty diſadvantage to truth in ſome; from their *bodily temper*. *Melancholy* tempers, and diſpoſitions, are many times, great hindrances to the truth. And if you would relieve their minds, you muſt mend their bodies by medicine. Theſe men are highly to be pitied, and to be dealt with long patience and ſupplied day by day with rational ſuggeſtions. For it is a hard matter in this caſe,

caſe, where the bodily temper is a rule to the ſentiments of the mind to do any good by the dictates of reaſon.

A *ſixth* diſadvantage, is *weakneſs of parts.* Thus we find, 'tis eaſier to convince a man of the nobleſt ſpirit, of the higheſt parts, and moſt refined morals, and the moſt perfected intellect, than one that is weak and conceited; for *it is rare but weak and wilful is the compoſition.* But he that hath any perfection, he loves to hear, and to be better inſtructed, and to have things fairly propoſed. The nobleſt ſpirits, and moſt tractable and teachable, they ſooneſt apprehend, and moſt ingenuouſly and impartially conſider. The weakeſt do moſt hardly lay down an opinion. Wherefore the apoſtle bids us, that we ſhould *not admit thoſe that are weak in the faith, to any doubtful diſputations.*

Now all theſe are *excuſable* things; and men that do fall ſhort of truth, or are in miſtake upon any of theſe ſix accounts, there is pity due to them, and much chriſtian moderation and forbearance; and they are to be relieved by our prayers and good ſuggeſtions day after day; now a little and then a little; now a hint, and then a hint offered to them, as they can bear it.

But I muſt ſuperadd *one more:* and indeed, I am aſhamed to ſpeak thereof; for it is quite out of the way of ingenuity and ſincerity, and doth not belong to any one that is a lover of truth; and it is ſo bad, that I cannot ſo far fail in charity, as to faſten it upon any particular perſon; but yet it doth take place among men; and that is *affectation of ſingularity,*

larity, and *worldly intereſt*. When a man would be the *head of a party*; when a man thinks if he goes the common way, he ſhall be *but one of many*, and not regarded; and then he is tempted to be ſingular in ſomething, that ſo he may be look't upon as a ſingular perſon, and of greater underſtanding than the reſt of men. *But this is not the ſpot of God's children.* Deut. xxxii. 5. This man truly is in a faction: this is unduly to *practiſe upon truth*; and quite out of the way of religion and ſincerity, and I have no apology for this man: for I cannot think any man ſincere in his way, or to have a good conſcience to God or love of truth in his heart, unleſs he do verily believe that to be true, that he doth pretend to; and that he doth believe it upon a competent ſearch, at leaſt a true endeavour to be informed in the difference between true and falſe, right and wrong. But for a man *to practiſe upon truth, or any concernment of religion, to ſubject it to worldly policy and worldly ends*; *this* is ſo unworthy a thing, that nothing can be more. For our religion is too noble and worthy a thing to be a *mean* to any other thing than the honour of God, and the ſalvation of our ſouls, and the good of the community.

End of the Firſt Volume.

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